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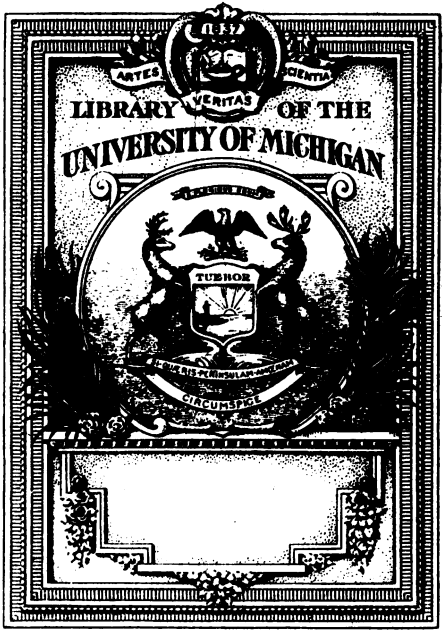

THE GIFT OF
Mrs. F. W. Kelsey

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COLLECTION

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BRITISH AUTHORS

TAUCHNITZ EDITION.

VOL. 3439.

PATIENCE SPARHAWK AND HER TIMES.

BY

GERTRUDE ATHERTON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

Gift
Mrs. F. W. Kelsey

PATIENCE SPARHAWK AND HER TIMES

BY

Franklin (Horn)
Mrs. GERTRUDE ATHERTON,
AUTHOR OF "AMERICAN WIVES AND ENGLISH HUSBANDS,"
ETC. ETC.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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BOOK III.

(CONTINUED.)

PATIENCE SPARHAWK AND HER TIMES.

BOOK III.

(CONTINUED.)

XI.

"FUNNY world," thought Patience. She shrugged her beautiful young shoulders cynically, and went forth to do her duty by the guests. As she passed out of the front-door to join some one of the scattered groups on the lawns, she heard a voice which made her pause and tap her forehead with her finger. It was a rich, deep voice, with a vibration in it, and a light suggestion of brogue. She turned to the drawing-room, whence it came. A man in riding-clothes was talking to Mrs. Peele, who was listening with a bend of the head that meant much to Patience's trained eye. The man had an athletic, nervous figure, suggestive of great virility and suppressed force, although it was carried with a fine repose. The thick black hair on his large, finely-shaped

head glinted here and there with silver. His profile was aquiline, delicately cut and very strong, his mouth, under the slight moustache, neither full nor thin, and both mobile and firm, the lips beautifully cut. The eyes, deeply set, were not large, and were of an indefinite blue-grey, but piercing, restless, kind, and humorous. There were lines about them, and a deep line on one side of his mouth. His lean face had a touch of red on its olive. He might have been anywhere between thirty-five and forty.

Patience recognised him and trembled a little, but with excitement, not passion. She had understood herself for once when she had said that in her present conditions she was incapable of love. Beverly Peele would have to go down among the memories before his wife could shake her spirit free, and turn with swept brain and clear eyes to even a conception of the love whose possibilities dwelt within her.

But she was fully alive to the picturesqueness of meeting this man once more, and suddenly became possessed of the spirit of adventure. There must be some sort of sequel to that old romance.

She withdrew to the shadow of a tree, where she could watch the drawing-room through the window. Burr entered, slapped the visitor on the back, and bore him away to the dining-room, presumably to have a drink. When they returned, Mr. Peele was in the room. He shook hands with the stranger more heartily than was his wont. In a few moments he crossed over to

the library, and Patience, seeing that her early hero would be held in conversation for some time to come, followed her father-in-law and asked casually who the visitor was.

"Oh, that's Bourke, Garan Bourke, the legal idol," sarcastically, "of Westchester County. In truth he's a brilliant lawyer enough, and one of the rising men at the New York bar, although he will go off his head occasionally and take criminal cases. I don't forgive him that, if he *is* always successful. However, we all have our little fads. I suppose he can't resist showing his power over a jury. I heard an enthusiastic youngster assert the other day that Bourke whips up a jury's grey matter into one large palpitating batter, then moulds it with the tips of his fingers while the jury sits with mouth open and spinal marrow paralysed. Personally, I like him well enough, and rather hoped he and Hal would fancy each other. But he doesn't seem to be a marrying man. You'd better go over and meet him. He'll just suit you."

Patience returned to her post. Burr had disappeared, Bourke was talking to half-a-dozen women. In a few moments he rose to go. Patience went hastily across the lawns to the narrow avenue of elms by the drive-way. No two were billing and cooing in its shadows, and Beverly was in bed with a nervous headache.

The moon was large and very brilliant. One could have read a newspaper as facilely as by the light of an

electric pear. As Bourke rode to the main avenue a woman came toward him. He had time to think her very beautiful and of exceeding grace before she surprised him by laying her hand on his horse's neck.

"Well?" she said, looking up and smiling as he reined in.

"Well?" he stammered, lifting his hat.

"I am too heavy to ride before you now."

He stared at her perplexedly, but made no reply.

"Still, if I were up a tree—literally, you know—and a band of terrible demons were shouting at a man beside a corpse—"

"What?" he said. "Not you?—not you? That homely, fascinating little girl—no, it cannot be possible—"

"Oh, yes," lifting her chin, coquettishly. "I have improved, and grown, you see. I was more than delighted when I saw you through the window. It was rather absurd, but I disliked the idea of going in to meet you conventionally—"

He laid his hand strongly on hers, and she treated him with a passivity denied to Latimer Burr.

"I am going to tie up my horse and talk to you awhile, may I?" America and the law had not crowded all the romance out of his Irish brain, and he was keenly alive to the adventure. He had forgotten her name long since, and it did not occur to him that this lovely, impulsive girl was the property of another man; but although he had lived too long, nor yet long enough,

to lose his heart to the first flash of magnetism from a pretty woman, yet his blood was thrilled by the commingling of spirituality and deviltry in the face of this high-bred girl who cared to give the flavour of romance to their acquaintance. He saw that she was clever, and he had no intention of making a fool of himself; but he was quite willing to follow whither she cared to lead. And it was night and the moon was high; the leaves sang in a crystal sea; a creek murmured somewhere; the frogs chanted their monotonous recitative to the hushed melodies and discords of the night world; the deep throbbing of steamboats came from the river.

He tied his horse to a tree, and they entered the avenue.

"You told me that it was a small world, and that we should probably meet again," she said; "and I never doubted that we should."

"Oh, I never did either," he exclaimed. He was racking his brains to recall the conversation which had passed between them a half-dozen years ago, and for the life of him could not remember a word; but he was a man of resource.

"I am glad that it is at night," he continued, "even if the scene is not so charming as Carmel Valley from that old tower. How beautiful the ocean looked from there, and what a jolly ride we had in the pine-woods!"

She understood perfectly, and grinned in the dark.

"Ah! I remember I gave you some advice," he

exclaimed with suspicious abruptness. "I thought afterward that it was great presumption on my part."

"I wonder if you had an ideal of your own in mind when you spoke?"

"An ideal?" He cursed his memory and floundered hopelessly. Even his Irish wit for once deserted him.

"Oh, I hoped you had not forgotten it. Why, I have made a little 'Night Thoughts' of what you said, and it has been one of the strongest forces in my development. Shall I repeat it to you?"

"Oh, please." He was blushing with pleasure, but sore perplexed.

And she repeated his comments and advice, word for word.

"Is it possible that you remember all that? I am deeply flattered." And he was, in fact.

"What more natural than that I should remember? I was a lonely little waif, full of dreams and vague ideals, and with much that was terrible in my actual life. I had never talked with a young man before—a man of seventy was my only experience of your sex, barring boys, that don't count. And you swooped down into my life in the most picturesque manner possible, and talked as no one in my little world was capable of talking. So, you see, it is not so remarkable that I retain a vivid impression of you and your words. I was frightfully in love with you."

"Oh—were you? Were you?" He was very much

at sea. It was true that she had paid him the most subtle tribute one mind can pay to another, but her very audacity would go to prove that she was a brilliant coquette. He had a keen sense of the ridiculous, and he was still a little afraid of her. He took refuge on the broad, impersonal shore of flirtation, where the boat is ever dancing on the waves.

"If you felt obliged to use the past tense you might have left that last unsaid."

"Oh, there are a thousand years between fifteen and twenty-one. I am quite another person, as you see."

"You are merely an extraordinary child developed; and you have carried your memory along with you."

"Oh, yes, the memory is there, and the tablets are pretty full; but never mind me. I want to know if your ideals are as strong now as I am sure they were then—if anyone in this world manages to hold onto his ideals when circumstances don't happen to coddle them."

"Oh, I don't know," he said. "I'm afraid I haven't thought much about them since that night. I doubt if I'd given too much thought to them before. Deep in every man's brain is an ideal of some sort, I imagine, but it is seldom he sits down and analyses it out. He knows when he's missed it and locked the gates behind him, and perhaps, occasionally, he knows when he's found it—or something approximating it. We are all the victims of that terrible thing called Imagina-

tion, which, I sometimes think, is the sudden incursion of a satirical Deity. I have not married—why, I can hardly say. Perhaps because there has been some vague idea that if I waited long enough I might meet the one woman; but partly, also, because I have had no very great desire to marry. I keep bachelor's hall over on the Sound, and the life is very jolly and free of small domestic details. There are so many women that give you almost everything you want—or at least four or five will make up a very good whole—that I have never yet faced the tremendous proposition of going through life expecting one woman to give me everything my nature and mind demand. But there are such women, I imagine," he added abruptly, trying to see her face in one of the occasional splashes of moonlight.

"A very clever woman—Mrs. Lafarge; perhaps you know her—said to me the other day, that many men and women of strong affinity took a good deal of spirituality with them into marriage, but soon forgot all about it—matrimony is so full of reiterant details, and everything becomes so matter of course. Do you think that is true?"

"I am afraid it is. The imagination wears blunt. The Deity is sending his electricity elsewhere—to those still prowling about the shores of the unknown. Perhaps if one could keep the danger in mind—if one were unusually clever—I don't know. I fancy civilisation will get to that point after awhile. Unquestionably the com-

panionship of man and woman, when no essentials are lacking, is the one supremely satisfying thing in life. If we loved each other, for instance—on such a night—it seems to me that we are in tune—"

"But we don't love each other, as it happens, and we met about three quarters of an hour ago. We'll probably hate each other by daylight."

"Oh, I hope not," he said, accepting the ice-water. "But tell me what your ideals were. I hope they have proved more stable than mine."

"Oh, mine were a sort of yearning for some unseen force in nature; I suppose the large general force from which love is a projection. Every mortal, except the purely material, the Beverly Peele type, for instance, has an affinity with something in the invisible world, an uplifting of the soul. Christianity satisfies the great mass, hence its extraordinary hold. Do you suppose the real link between the soul of man and the soul of nature will ever be established?"

He laughed a little, piqued, but amused. "You are very clever," he said, "and this is just the hour and these are just the circumstances for impersonal abstractions. Well—perhaps the link will be established when we have lived down this civilisation and entered upon another which has had drilled out of it all the elements which plant in human nature the instincts of cupidity and sordidness and envy and political corruption, and all that goes to make us the aliens from nature that we are. About all that keeps us in touch with her now

are our large vices. There is some tremendous spiritual force in the Universe which projects itself into us, making man and nature correlative. What wonder that man—particularly an imaginative and intelligent child —should be affected and played upon by this Mystery? What wonder that the heathens have gods, and the civilised a symbol called the Lord God?—a concrete something which they can worship, and upon which unburden the load of spirituality which becomes oppressive to matter? It is for the same reason that women fall in love and marry earlier than men, who have so many safety-valves. On the other hand, men who have a great deal of emotional imagination and who can neither love nor accept religion take refuge in excess. It is all a matter of temperament. Cold-blooded people—those that have received a meagre share of this great vital force pervading the Universe, which throws a continent into convulsions or a human being into ecstasy—such, for instance, are religious only because their ancestors were,—their brain is pointed that way. Their blood has nothing to do with it, as is the more general case —for Christianity is pre-eminently sensuous."

"What do you suppose will take its place? The world is bound to become wholly civilised in time; but still human nature will demand some sort of religion (which is another word for ideality), some sort of lode-star."

"A superlative refinement, I think; a perfected æstheticism which shall by no means eradicate the strong

primal impulses; which shall, in fact, create conditions of higher happiness than now exist. Do we not enjoy all arts the more as they approach perfection? Does not a nude appeal with more subtle strength to the senses the more exquisite its beauty, the more entire its freedom from coarseness? When people strive to place human nature on a level with what is highest in art and in nature itself, the true religion will have been discovered. So far, man himself is infinitely below what man has achieved. It is hard to believe that genius is the result of any possible combination of heredity. It would seem that it must, like its other part, imagination, be the direct and more permanent indwelling of the supreme creative force—as if the creator would lighten his burden occasionally, and shakes off rings which float down to torment favoured brains."

"I always knew that I should love to hear you talk," murmured Patience.

His hand closed over hers. He drew it through his arm and held it against his heart, which was beating irregularly.

"And I haven't talked so much nor such stuff to a woman since God made me. I believe that I could talk to you through twenty years. You have said enough to-night to make me hope that our minds have been running along the same general lines. Tell me—honestly—no coquetry—has what I said that night had the slightest effect in your development?"

She told the tale of the day in the crystal woods, giving a sufficiently comprehensive sketch of the events which had led up to it to make her the more keenly interesting to the man whose brain was beginning to whirl a little.

"If you had come at that moment," she concluded, "I would have gone with you to the end of the earth. I have a pretty strong personality, but there was a good deal of wax in me then, and if you could have gotten it between your hands I think that what you moulded would have closely resembled your ideal—the impression you had already made had so strongly coloured and trained my imagination. But," she continued hastily, and glancing anxiously to the far distant end of the avenue, "you see my life changed immediately after that, and I went into the world and became hard and bitter and cynical. I have no ideals left, and I do not want any—I have seen too much—"

"Hush!" he said passionately, "I do not believe a word of it. Why, that was not two years ago, and you are still a young girl. Have you loved anyone else?" he asked abruptly, his voice less steady.

"No!"

He was too excited to note the meaning of her emphasis. He was only conscious that he was very close to a beautiful woman who allured him in all ways as no one woman had ever done before.

"You are full of a girl's cynicism," he said; "you have seen just enough to make you think you know the

world—to accept the superficial for the real. You—you yourself are an ideal. All you need is to know yourself, and I am going to undertake the task of teaching you—do you hear? If I fail—if I have made a mistake—if it is only the night and your beauty that have gone to my head—well and good; but I shall have the satisfaction of having tried—of knowing—"

"No, no! No, no!" she said. "You must not come here again. I do not want to see you again—"

"Nonsense! You have some sentimental foolish idea in your head,—or perhaps you are engaged to some man who can give you great wealth and position. I shall not regard that, either. If I feel to you by daylight as I do now, I'll have you—do you understand?"

Patience opened her lips to tell him the truth, then cynically made up her mind to let matters take their course. At the same time she was bitterly resentful that she should feel as she did, not as she had once dreamed of feeling for this man.

"Very well," she said, "I shall be here for awhile."

"And I shall see you in the course of a day or two. I'm going now. Good-night." He let her arm slip from under his, but held her hand closely. "And even if it so happened that I never did see you again, I should thank you for the glimpse you have given me of a woman I hardly dared dream existed."

When he had gone she anathematised fate for a moment, then went back to her guests.

XII.

LATIMER BURR was evidently a man upon whom rebuff sat lightly. The next morning he came suddenly upon Patience in a dark corner, and tried to kiss her. Whenever the opportunity offered he held her hand, and once, to her infinite disgust, he planted his foot squarely on hers under the dinner table. A few hours later they happened to be alone in one of the small reception-rooms.

"Look here," exclaimed Patience, wrathfully, "will you let me alone?"

"No, I won't," he said good-naturedly. "Jove! but you are a beauty!"

She wore a gown of white mull and lace, trimmed with large knots of dark-blue velvet. She had been talking all the evening with Mr. Peele, Mr. Field, and Burr, and was somewhat excited. Her lips were very pink, her eyes very bright and dark. She held her head with a young triumph in beauty and the intellectual tribute of clever men.

"Hal would be delighted. She has always wanted me to become the fashion."

"You never will be that, for there are not enough

brainy men in society to appreciate you. If all were like myself, you would be wearied with the din of admiration—"

"There's nothing like having a good opinion of oneself."

"Why not? I don't set up to be an intellectual man —intellectual men are out of date; but I'm a brainy man, and I'd like to know how I'm to help being aware of the fact. I certainly don't claim to be pretty, so you can't say I'm actually wallowing in conceit."

Patience was forced to laugh. "Oh, you'd do very well if you'd exercise as much sense in regard to women as you do to affairs. Just answer me one question, will you? Are you so amazingly fascinating that women have the habit of succumbing at the end of the second interview?"

"I never set up to be an ass."

"But your manner is quite assured. You seem very much surprised that I don't tumble into your arms and say 'Thank-you.' Oh, you New York men are so funny!"

"Well, answer me one question—you don't love your husband, do you?"

"No, I don't."

"Do you like me?"

"I would if you wouldn't make such an idiot of yourself. You certainly are very agreeable to talk to."

He came closer, his lids falling. The fine repose of his manner was a trifle ruffled. "Do you love anybody else?" he asked.

"I do not."

"Then let me love you."

"I shall not."

"Then if you don't love your husband and you like me and will not let me love you, you must have a lover."

Patience burst into brief hilarity.

"Is that the logic of your kind?"

"A beautiful woman that does not love her husband always loves another man."

"Or is willing to be loved by the first man that happens to have no other affair on hand."

"You have said that you like me."

"I didn't say I loved you!"

"I'd make you!"

"Oh!" with a deep contempt he was incapable of understanding, "you couldn't. But tell me another thing; I'm very curious. Has it never occurred to you that a woman must be wooed, that it is somewhat necessary to arouse sentiment and feeling in her before she is willing to advance one step? Why, you and your kind demand her off-hand in a way that is positively funny. What has become of all the old traditions?"

"Oh, bother," he said. "Life is too short to waste time on old-fashioned nonsense. If a man wants a woman he says so, and if she's sensible and likes him

she meets him half way. Men and women of the world know what they want."

"That is all there is to love then? It no longer means anything else whatever?"

"Oh—you are all wrong. If you were not a spiritual woman I wouldn't cross the room to win you. One can buy the other sort. It is your spirituality, your intellectuality, that fascinates me as much as your beauty."

"What do you know about spirituality?" she said contemptuously. "I don't like to hear you speak the word. You desecrate it."

He flushed purple. "There are few things I don't understand—and a good deal better than you do, perhaps."

"You have a clever man's perception, that is all. Association with all sorts of women has taught you the difference between them. But what could you give a spiritual woman? Nothing. You have not a shrunken kernel of soul. The sensual envelope is too thick; your brain too crowded with the thousand and one petty experiences of material life. You are as ingenuous as all fast men, for the women you have spent your life running after make no demands upon subtlety—"

"Take care," he said angrily; "you are going too far. I tell you I have as much soul as any man living."

"Perhaps. I doubt if any man has much. Men give women nothing, as far as I can see. If we want

companionship there seems nothing to do but to descend to your level and grovel with you."

"I would never make you grovel. I would reverence—"

"Oh, rot!" she cried, stamping her foot. "What a fool—and worse—the average woman must be. You have no idea how ingenuously you are giving away the women of society. And soul! The idea of a man who pretends to love the woman he is engaged to and is making love to another, and that her sister-in-law and most intimate friend, claiming to have a soul! Have you no sense of humour? I say nothing about honour, as I wish to be understood, if possible; but you are clever enough to see the ridiculous in most things—Please don't walk over me. There is plenty of room. And the windows are open, you know—"

"Yes, and I am here," cried a furious voice, and Beverly sprang into the room.

Patience stepped back with a faint exclamation. Burr turned white. Beverly was shaking with rage. His face was almost black; there were white flecks on his nostrils.

"I kept quiet," he articulated, "to hear every word. You dog!" to Burr. "I may be pretty bad, but I'd never do what you have done. And as for you," he shook his fist at his wife, "you were only leading him on. If I could only have held myself in another moment I'd have seen you in his arms. Get out of this

house," he roared, "both of you. You'll never marry my sister. I'm going to tell her this minute—"

Burr sprang forward and caught him by the collar; but Beverly was not a coward. He turned, flinging out his fist, and the two men grappled. Patience closed the door and glanced out of the window. No one was near. Voices floated up from the cliffs. Burr was the more powerful man of the two, and in a moment had flung Beverly, panting, into a chair.

"Keep him here," said Patience, rapidly, and she left the room.

"Man is certainly still a savage, a brute," she thought. "What is the matter with civilisation?"

As she crossed the lawn, she met one of the servants.

"Go and find Miss Hal, and ask her to come here," she said. A few moments later her sister-in-law hurried up from the cliffs.

"What is it?" she called cheerily. "Has Bev had an apoplectic fit?"

"Beverly has been making a greater fool of himself than usual," said Patience, as the girls met, "and I want to see you before he does. I was standing in one of the reception-rooms talking to Mr. Burr after Mr. Field and Mr. Peele had gone out, and he had on all his manner and was telling me how beautiful I was, in his usual after dinner style, when Beverly leaped through the window like the wronged husband in the melodrama and accused us of making love. He threat-

ened to come and tell you, and he and Mr. Burr wrestled like two prize-fighters. If Beverly were put on the witness stand he'd be obliged to admit that Mr. Burr had not so much as touched my hand. I suppose you will believe me?"

Hal gave her light laugh. "Certainly, my dear, certainly; although if I were a man I should fall in love with you myself. I wouldn't bet on Latimer, but I would on you—so don't worry your little head. Do you suppose I expect a man with that mouth and those eyes to be faithful to me? Still, I must say that I should have given him credit for more decency than to make love to my sister-in-law—"

"He didn't! I swear he didn't."

"Oh, of course not! Nor will he make love to every pretty woman he finds himself alone with for five minutes. He can't help it, poor thing. Let us go and talk to the gentlemen."

As they entered the little room she exclaimed airily, "Been making a fool of yourself again, Bev? No, don't speak. Patience has told me all about it. I have every confidence in her and Latimer. Better go and take a spin with Tammany. Latimer, you really must mend your manners. They're too good. From a distance a stranger would really think you were making love when you are swearing at the heat. Now, come down to the Tea House. Good-night, Bevvy dear."

And she went off between her lover and her sister-

in-law, leaving her brother to swear forth his righteous indignation.

That night Patience opened the door of her husband's room for the first time. Beverly, who had just entered, was so astonished that the wrath he had carefully nourished fell like quicksilver under a cool wave, and he stared at her without speaking.

"I wish to tell you," said his wife, "that you were entirely justified in being angry to-night. I could have suppressed Burr by a word, but I chose to lead him on to gratify my curiosity. Hal wishes to marry him, and I am determined that she shall. If I had admitted the truth to her or permitted you to enlighten her, her self-respect would have forced her to break the engagement. That would have been absurd, for the match is exactly what she wants, and she is not marrying with illusions. But you have been treated inconsiderately, and I apologise for my share in it. Will you forgive me?"

"Of course I'll forgive you," said Beverly, eagerly. "I wasn't angry with you, anyhow—only with that scoundrel. But I never believed you'd do this. Do you care for me a little?"

Patience averted her face that she might not see the expression on his. Despite her loathing of him she gave him a certain measure of pity. With all the preponderance of the savage in him and the limitations of his intelligence he had his own capacity for suffering, and to-night he stood before her crushed under the

sudden reaction, his eyes full of the dumb appeal of shrinking brutes.

"If we are going to live peacefully don't let us discuss that subject," she said gently. "We have both missed it, and I sometimes think that you are more to be pitied than I am. However, I shall not flirt—I promise you that. Good-night."

That was the last of Mr. Burr's illegal love-making at Peele Manor. He had had a fright and a lesson, and he forgot neither.

XIII.

"GARAN BOURKE is coming to dinner to-night," said Hal, the next day. "It's the hardest thing in the world to get him; he never goes anywhere; but he half promised mamma, when he called the other night, that he'd come some day this week, and he wrote yesterday, saying he'd dine with us to-day. I want you to meet him. He is awfully clever, and when he talks I want to close my eyes and listen to his voice. If the dear girls ever get the vote and do jury duty, all he'll have to do will be to quote law. He needn't take the trouble to sum up. His voice will do the business every time."

Patience, in a French gown of black chiffon, was very beautiful that night. She did not go down to dinner

until everyone was seated. Bourke sat next to Mrs. Peele. Her own chair was near the end of the opposite side of the long table. For a time she did not look at Bourke. When she did she met his eyes; and knew by their expression that someone had told him she was the wife of Beverly Peele.

After dinner he went with Mr. Peele and Burr into the library. Patience was about to follow a party of young people down to the bluff, when Mr. Field drew her arm firmly through his.

"You are not going to desert your court?" he said. "Why, you don't suppose I come up here to talk to Peele, do you? If you go out with those boys I'll never come here again." And he led her into the library.

It was nearly twelve o'clock when she found herself alone with Bourke. The others had gone out, one by one. She had made no attempt to follow them. She sat with defiant eyes and inward trepidation. Bourke regarded her with narrowed eyes and twitching nostrils.

"So you are married?" he said at last.

"Yes."

"And you deliberately made a fool of me?"

"No—no—I did nothing deliberately that night—no—I acted on impulse. And all that I said was quite true. Of course I should have told you—"

"But it would have spoiled your comedy."

"No—no—don't think that. I see that I was dis-

honest—I am not making excuses—I never thought you'd become really interested—"

"I am not breaking my heart. Don't let that worry you. The mere fact of your dishonesty is quite enough to break the spell—for you are not the woman I imagined you to be. I was merely worshipping an ideal for the hour. Do you love your husband?"

"No."

"Then you are a harlot," he said, deliberately. "It only needed that." He rose to his feet and looked contemptuously at her scarlet face. "At all events it was an amusing episode," he said. "Good-night."

XIV.

It was a matter of comment before the summer was over, both among the guests at Peele Manor and the neighbours, that Mr. and Mrs. Beverly Peele had come to the parting of the ways. As the young man's infatuation was as notable as his wife's indifference, he received the larger share of sympathy. The married men championed Patience and expressed it in their time-honoured fashion; and although they worried her she looked forward with terror to the winter: she would willingly have taken them all to board and trusted to their wives to keep them in order.

Beverly had confided his woes long since to his

mother. She declined to discuss the subject with her daughter-in-law, but treated her with a chill severity. Fortunately they were gay that summer, and Patience had much to do. Hal and May were absorbed in preparations for their wedding, and the duties of hostess fell largely on her shoulders.

Late in the fall there was a double wedding under the medallion of Peele the First. Immediately thereafter May went to Cuba; and Hal to Europe, to pay a series of visits. Mrs. Peele continued to entertain, and was obliged to confess that her daughter-in-law was very useful, and in deportment above reproach. Outwardly Patience looked almost as cold a woman of the world as herself, and gave no evidence of the storms brewing within; but one day she hung out a signal. Mrs. Peele announced that she should go to town on the first of December. Patience followed her into her bedroom and closed the door.

"May I speak to you a moment alone?" she asked.

"Certainly," said Mrs. Peele, frigidly. "Will you sit down?"

She herself took an upright chair, and suggested, Patience thought, a judge on his bench.

"I want to go to town with you this winter."

"I should be happy to have my dear son with me, and I will not deny that you are a great help to me; but Beverly is as strongly opposed as ever to city life. I asked him myself to go down for the winter, but he

refused. He is one of Nature's own children, and loves the country."

"He certainly is very close to Nature in several of her moods. But I wish to go whether he does or not."

"You would leave your husband?" Mrs. Peele spoke with meditative scorn.

"It will be better for both of us not to be shut up here together for another winter. I—I will not answer for the consequences."

"Is that a threat?"

"You can take it as you choose."

"Do you not love my son?"

"No, I do not."

"And you are not ashamed to make such an admission?"

"Would you prefer to have me lie about it?"

"It is your duty to love your husband."

"That proposition is rather too absurd for argument, don't you think so? Will you persuade Beverly to let me go with you to town?"

"I shall not. You should be glad, overjoyed, to have such a husband. You should feel grateful," she added, unburdening her spite in the vulgarity which streaks high and low, "that he loved you well enough to overlook your lack of family and fortune—"

But Patience had left the room.

That evening she went to her father-in-law and stated her case. She spoke calmly, although she was

bitter and sore and worried. "I cannot stay here with Beverly this winter," she continued. "I need not explain any farther. Mrs. Peele will not consent to my going to town with her. But couldn't I live abroad? I could do so on very little. I should care nothing for society if I could live my life by myself. I should be quite contented with books and freedom. But I cannot stay here with Beverly alone again."

Mr. Peele shook his head. "It wouldn't do. I understand; but it would only result in scandal, and I don't like scandal. We have never gone to pieces, like so many great New York families. Our women have been proud and conservative, and have not used their position to cloak their amours. I have perfect confidence in you, of course; but if you went to Europe and left Beverly raging here, people would say that you had gone to meet another man. Moreover, it would do no good. Beverly would follow you. And he will give you no cause for divorce: he has the cunning peculiar to the person of ugly disposition and limited mentality. No, try to stand it. Remember that all the humours of human nature have their limit. Beverly will become indifferent in time. Then he will let you come to us. I intend to take a rest in a year or two and go abroad, and I shall be glad to have you with us. I do not mind telling you that you are the brightest young woman I have ever known—and Mr. Field has said the same thing."

But Patience was not in a mood to bend her neck to flattery. She shook her head gloomily.

"If I have any brain, cannot you see that I suffer the more? Mr. Peele, I cannot stay here with Beverly! Do you know that sometimes I have felt that I could kill him? I am afraid of myself."

"Hush! Hush! Don't say such things. You excitable young women are altogether too extravagant in your way of expressing yourselves. Words carry a great deal farther than you have any idea of—take an old lawyer's word for it. Now try to stand it. In fact, you must stand it. I'll do all I can. I'll leave a standing order with Brentano to send you all the new books, and I'll insist upon your coming up every week or so to have some amusement. But for God's sake make no scandal."

XV.

On the first of December Patience and Beverly were alone once more. The weather was fine, and Beverly temporarily absorbed in breaking in a colt on his private track. Patience spent the first day wandering about the woods, tormented by her thoughts. She remembered with passionate regret the old crystal woods where she had been a girl of dreams and ideals. Her ideals were in ruins. The hero of her dreams had told

her a hideous truth that had made her hate him and more abundantly despise herself. She longed ardently to get away to a mountain top, a hundred miles from civilisation. Nature had been her friend in the old Californian days, and the green or white beauty of her second environment had satisfied her in that peaceful intermediate time. But Westchester County, although exquisitely pretty, lacked grandeur and the suggestion of colossal throes in remote ages with which every stone in California is eloquent. That was what she wanted now. But there was no prospect of getting away. Did she have enthusiasm enough left to leave summarily she had little money. She was very extravagant, and left the larger part of her quarterly allowance with New York shops and milliners and dressmakers; but she knew that the end was approaching, and listlessly awaited it.

Heavy with rebellious disgust she returned to the house and went mechanically to the library. For a-while she did not read; she felt no impulse to do so. But after a time she took down a book in desperation, a volume of a new *édition de luxe* of "Childe Harold." She had not read it during her brief Byronic fever, and had not opened the poet since. Gradually she forgot self. She began with the third canto, and when she had finished the fourth she discovered that her spirits were lighter, a weight had risen from her brain. She had always regarded "notes" as an evidence of the

amateur reader, but to-day she scrawled on a fly-leaf of Mr. Peele's new morocco edition:—

"As the Christian goes to his God for help, the intellectual, in hours of depression and disgust and doubt go to the great Creators of Literature, those master minds that lift our own temporarily above the terrible enigma of the commonplace, and possess us to the extinction of personal meditation. Are not these genii as worthy of deification by the higher civilisation as was Jesus Christ—their brother—by the great illogical suffering mass of mankind? 'Faith shall make ye whole,' said Christ; 'come unto me, all ye that are heavy laden.' 'Develop your brain, and I will give you self-oblivion, philosophy, and a soul of many windows,' say the great masters of thought and style, the stupendous creative imaginations."

Beverly came home in high good-humour; his colt had showed his blood, and nearly pulled him out of the break-cart. Patience endeavoured to appear interested, and he was so pleased that the atmosphere during dinner was quite domestic. Afterward he went to sleep on a sofa by the library fire, and his wife read.

A week passed more placidly than Patience had expected. Beverly was evidently under stress to make himself agreeable. His wife suspected that he had had a long and meaning conference with his father. In truth he was desperately afraid that she would leave him. Patience did not know whether she hated him most when he was amiable or violent; but she hated herself more than she hated him.

"I think I'll go to town and see Rosita," she thought one morning as she awakened. "It seems to me that she is the fittest companion I could find."

At the breakfast-table she appeared in a tailor frock and turban, and informed Beverly that she was going to town to pay some visits. Beverly looked at her for a moment with black face, then dropped his eyes without comment. He recalled his father's advice.

"What train shall you come home in?" he asked after a moment. "I'll go down to the station to meet you."

"I cannot say. I shall be back to dinner."

"Aren't you going to kiss me good-bye?" he asked sullenly, when she was about to open the front-door. She hesitated a moment, then raised her face, closing her eyes, lest he should see the impulse to strike him. He saw the hesitation and turned away with an oath, then ran after her, flung his arms about her and kissed her. She walked down to the station with burning face, rubbing her mouth and cheeks violently, careless of the wide-eyed regard of two gardeners.

XVI.

WHEN she arrived at Rosita's the maid admitted her without protest, not recognising in this elegant young woman the countrified girl of two years before. She left Patience in the dark drawing-room, but returned in a moment and announced that Madame would see Mrs. Peele at once. Patience followed the woman through

the boudoir and bedroom to the bath-room, a classic apartment of pink tiles. The tub was merely one corner of the room walled off with tiles; and in it, covered from throat to foot with a sheet, her head on a silken strap, lay Rosita. By her side sat a girl in a fashionable ulster and large hat, a note-book and pencil on her lap. Rosita looked like a dark-haired Aphrodite, and was as fresh as a rose. A maid had just dried one pink and white hand, and she held it out to Patience.

"Patita! Patita! Patita!" she said with her sweet drawl and accent, and without a trace of resentment in her soft, heavy eyes. "Where, where have you been all these years? Miss Merrien, this is my oldest and dearest friend, Mrs. Beverly Peele [she pronounced the name with visible pride]. Patita, this is Miss Merrien of the 'Day.' She is interviewing me."

Patience flushed as she bent her head to the young woman, who regarded her with conspicuous amazement, and whose nostrils quivered a little, as if she scented a "story." She was a pretty girl with a dark, rather worn face, a frank eye, and a nervous manner.

"Patita, sit down there just for a moment while I look at you. Then we will go into the other room. I could not wait to see you. *Dios de mi alma,* but you have changed, Patita *mia.* Who would ever have thought that you would be such a beauty and such a swell. Grey cloth and chinchilla! Just think, Miss Merrien, we used to wear sunbonnets and copper-toed

boots, and drove an old blind horse that would not go off a walk."

"May I put that down?" asked the girl, eagerly.

"Oh, please don't," exclaimed Patience. Miss Merrien's face fell. Then she smiled, and said good-naturedly, "All right, I won't."

"And now Patita is a swell," pursued Rosita, as if no interruption had occurred, "and I am a famous *prima donna.* Such is life. Patita, do you know that I have two hundred thousand dollars invested?"

"Really?"

"*Si, señorita!* Oh, my price has gone up, Patita *mia,*" and she laughed her low delicious laugh.

Miss Merrien smiled. "A man shot himself for that laugh the other day—I suppose you read about it," she said.

"No, I did not. I have read the newspapers irregularly of late—the 'stories,' at least."

"It is true," said Rosita, complacently. "Oh, Patita, life is so lovely. To think that we both had such great destinies! *Pobre* Manuela, and Panchita, and all the rest! *Bueno,* go into the bedroom, both of you, and I will be there in ten minutes."

Patience and Miss Merrien seated themselves in the white bower of velvet and lace.

"Please do not put me into your story," said Patience, hastily. "It would not do—you see my husband

would not like it—but we are old friends, and I wanted to see her."

Miss Merrien nodded intelligently. With the suspicion of her craft she leaped to the conclusion that the fashionable young woman came to her disreputable friend for an occasional lark.

"Oh, I promise you. If you hadn't asked me I should though. It would make a fine story."

"Tell me," said Patience abruptly, "do you like being a newspaper woman? Is it very hard work?"

"Yes, it's hard work," Miss Merrien answered in some surprise; "but then it is the most fascinating, I do believe, in the whole world. I have a family and a home out West, and I could go back and be comfortable if I wanted to; but I wouldn't give up this life, with all its grind and uncertainty, for that dead and alive existence. I only go out there once a year to rest. I came on here for an experiment, to see a little of the world. I had a dreadful time catching on; once I thought I'd starve, for I was bound I wouldn't write home for money; but I hung on and got there. And I'm here to stay."

"Oh, is it really so pleasant? Sometimes I wish I were a newspaper woman."

"You? You? I never saw anybody that looked less like one."

"I am very strong. I am naturally pale, that is all."

"Oh, your skin is lovely: it's that warm, dead white.

I wasn't thinking of that. But you look like the princess that felt the pea under sixteen mattresses."

"One adapts oneself easily to luxury. I have only had it two years. I do like it certainly. Nevertheless, I'd like to be a newspaper woman. You look tired; are you?"

"Yes, I am, Mrs. Peele. It's hard work, if it is fascinating; for instance, I've chased about this entire week for stories that haven't panned out for a cent. I haven't made ten dollars. I came up here as a last resource. La Rosita is always good-natured, and I hoped she'd have a story for me. But all I've got is a crank that's following her about threatening to kill her if she doesn't marry him, and that's such a chestnut. If I could only fake something I know she'd let it go, but my imagination's worn to a thread—"

The *portière* was pushed aside, and Rosita entered. She wore a glistening night-robe of silk and lace and ribbon under a yellow plush bath-gown. Her dense black hair fell to her knees. She slid into bed and ordered her maid to admit the manicure. An old woman, looking like a witch and clad in shabby black, came in and took a chair beside the bed. The maid brought a crystal bowl and warm water, and a golden manicure set, and Rosita held forth her incomparable arm with its little Spanish hand. She lay with indolent grace among the large pillows.

"You certainly are a beauty," exclaimed Miss Merrien, enthusiastically.

Rosita smiled with much pleasure. "I love to hear a woman say that, and I shall make good copy for many years yet. I shall not fade like most Spanish women. Oh, I have learned many secrets."

"I wish you hadn't told them to me, and then I should still have them to write about. They made a great story."

"*Dios! Dios!*" said Rosita, plaintively, "I wish we could think of something. I hate to send you away with nothing at all. I love to be written about. Patita, can't you think of something?"

"Now, Mrs. Peele," said Miss Merrien, "let us see if you are a good fakir. That is one of the first essentials of being a successful newspaper woman."

"Oh, dear! Is it? If I could fake I'd make books. I'd like that even better. Rosita, did you ever tell the newspapers about that time I coached you for your first appearance on any stage, and the great hit you made?"

"What is that?" asked Miss Merrien, sharply.

"I never thought of it. Patita, you tell the story."

This Patience did, while Miss Merrien wrote rapidly in shorthand, pausing occasionally to exclaim with rapture.

"Oh, my good angel sent me here this morning," she said when Patience had finished. "I won't mention your name, of course, but you won't mind my saying that you are one of the Four Hundred."

"I don't suppose there is any objection. I am such

an obscure member of it that no one will suspect me. Only don't give any details."

"Oh, I won't, indeed I won't." She slipped her book into her muff and rose to go. "You don't know how much obliged I am. I'll do as much for you some day. If ever you want to be written up, let me know."

"I never should want to be in the newspapers."

"Oh, there's no telling. You haven't had a taste of it yet. Well, good-morning," and she went out.

Patience leaned back in her luxurious chair, and watched the old woman polish the pretty nails. Rosita babbled, and Patience watched her face closely. Its colouring was as fresh, its contours as perfect as ever, but there was a faint touch of hardness somewhere, and the eyes held more secrets than they had two years ago. They were the eyes of the wanton. For a moment Patience forgot her surroundings. Her mind flew back to the old days, to the rickety buggy with the two contented, innocent little girls, then, by a natural deflection, to her tower and her dreams. She longed passionately for the old Mission, and wondered if Solomon were still alive. Then she thought of Bourke, and came back to the present with a shudder. The woman had gone.

"What is the matter?" asked Rosita. "Is it true—what the men say—that you are not happy with your husband?"

"I hate him," said Patience.

"Why don't you get a divorce?"

"I have no grounds."

"No grounds? Fancy a wife having no grounds!"

"I have not the slightest doubt of his faith."

"Send him to me."

"Oh, Rosita! How can you be so coarse?"

"No-o-o-o! You are my old friend. I would do anything for you. Think it over, Patita *mia*."

"I do not need to think it over. I would never do so vile a thing as that. Have you no refinement left?"

"What earthly use would I have for refinement? Patita, you are such a baby, and you always had ideals and things. Have you got them yet?"

"No," said Patience, rising abruptly. "I haven't. Good-bye."

"Good-bye, Patita dear," said Rosita, with unruffled good-humour, "and if ever you are in trouble come here and I will take you in. I would even lend you money, and if you knew me you would know how much I loved you to do that. There is not another person living I would give a five-cent piece to."

When Patience reached the sidewalk she filled her lungs with fresh air, then looked at her watch. It was only a half after twelve, and she decided to call on Mary Gallatin. She had never yet paid that charming young fashionette the promised morning call, although she had attended one or two of her afternoon receptions.

She told the coachman to drive to the house in Fifty-

seventh Street, then threw herself back on the seat and laughed, a long unpleasant laugh. She tapped first one foot and then the other, with increasing nervousness.

"What fools we mortals be to cry for the unattainable," she said, addressing the little mirror opposite. "Probably that young newspaper woman envies me bitterly. So, doubtless, do many others. Why on earth am I longing for what I'll never find, instead of making the best of a bad bargain and the most of my position? I think I'll find my way out of the difficulty with the average woman's solution: I'll take a lover."

The carriage stopped before a house with the breadth of stoop which in New York means plentiful wealth. She waited in the drawing-room while the cautious butler went up to see if his mistress would receive this stranger. He returned in a moment and conducted her up to a door at the front of the house. Patience entered a large room whose light was so subdued that for a moment she could see only vaguely outlined forms.

"Oh, Mrs. Beverly, how dear of you," cried a sweet voice, and Patience groped her way round the angle of a large bed and saw Mrs. Gallatin sitting against a mass of pillows. "I'm so glad you came this morning. I'm feeling so blue. I've twisted my foot, you know, and my friends are so kind to me. Mr. Rutger, give Mrs. Peele a chair. Mrs. Beverly, you know Mr. Rutger and Mr. Maitland and Mr. Owen, do you not? There is Leontine."

The three young men, who had risen as she entered,

bowed and resumed their seats. Mrs. Lafarge threw her a kiss from the depths of a chair by the fire.

Patience sat down and glanced about her while Mrs. Lafarge finished an anecdote she had been telling. Her eyes became accustomed to the light, and in a moment she saw things quite distinctly. The large room was furnished in Empire style, the walls and windows and the great mahogany and brass bedstead covered with crimson satin damask. There were only a few pieces of heavy furniture in the room, but like the bed they were magnificent. Each brass carving told a different story.

Mrs. Gallatin, smiling, exquisite, wore a cambric gown, less elaborate than Rosita's but more dainty. Her shining hair was drawn modishly to the top of her head and confined with a pink porcelain comb, carved into semblance of wild roses. A pink silk shawl slipped from her shoulders. Another wild rose was at her throat. On her hands she wore rubies only.

The story Mrs. Lafarge told was slightly naughty, and all laughed heartily at its conclusion. Patience had heard too many naughty stories in the last two years to be shocked; but when one of the young men began another he was promptly hissed down.

"You are not going to tell that before Mrs. Beverly," said Mary Gallatin. "She is quite too frightfully proper. But we're awfully fond of her all the same," and she patted Patience's hand while her lovely young face contracted in a charming scowl. Patience won-

dered if she had a lover—Mr. Gallatin was a dapper little man—and if that was why she looked so happy. She glanced speculatively at the men, and wondered if she could fall in love with one of them. But they were very ordinary New York youths of fashion, high of shoulder, slow of speech, large of epiglottis, vacuous of expression. She shook her head unconsciously.

"Why, what on earth are you thinking about?" cried Mrs. Gallatin, with her silvery laugh. "That wasn't a shake of disapproval, was it?"

"Oh, no, no!" said Patience, hastily. "Something occurred to me, and I forgot I was not alone. You see, I am so much alone that I've even gotten into the habit of thinking out loud." She felt that she was a restraint—the suppressed young man had relapsed into moody silence—and, as soon as she reasonably could, rose to go. Mrs. Gallatin kissed her warmly and Mrs. Lafarge came forward and kissed her also; but Patience detected a faint note of relief in their voices, and went downstairs feeling more depressed than ever. "There seems to be no place for me," she thought. "I must be out of tune with everything."

She went to her father-in-law's house in Eleventh Street and found Mrs. Peele and Honora gowned for expected luncheon guests. The former apologised coldly for not being able to ask her to join them, but "there was only room in the dining-room for eight." Honora rippled regret, and Patience felt that she should disgrace herself with tears if she did not get out of the

house. She went directly to the station, intending to return home, but as the train approached Peele Manor she turned her back squarely on the old house and decided to go on to Mariaville and see Miss Beale. She remembered with satisfaction that she knew at least one wholesome, thoroughly sincere woman, however misguided.

When she reached the station she concluded to walk to the house. She felt nervous and excited. Her cheeks burned and her temples ached a little. She had taken no nourishment that day but a cup of coffee and a roll, and her head felt light. It was now two o'clock.

When she had gone a little more than half way she lifted her eyes and saw Miss Beale coming toward her with beaming face, one hand ready to wave.

"Why, Patience!" she cried, as they met. "I'm so glad to see you. I'm just going to kiss you if it is on the street. I can't say I thought you'd forgotten me, for you've sent me money for my poor every time I begged for it; but I did think you'd never come to see me."

Patience had no excuse to offer, so wisely attempted none, but returned Miss Beale's embrace heartily. The older woman's face was brilliant with pleasure.

"Dear me, how pretty you have grown! What a colour! I'm so glad to see you looking so well. How happy dear Miss Tremont would be to see you now. She was always afraid you would be delicate. But we can't wish her back, can we, Patience?"

"There's no use wishing anything undone. Where are you going?"

"Where I am going to take you. Now, don't ask any questions, but just come along."

Patience, hoping that the destination was a fair where she could get luncheon, followed submissively, and evaded Miss Beale's personal inquiries as best she could.

"How does the Temperance Cause get on?" she asked at length.

"Oh, just the same! Just the same!" said Miss Beale, with a cheerful sigh. "One makes slow progress in this wicked world; all we can do is to trust in the Lord and do our humble best. Mariaville has three new saloons, and the father of one of my scholars beat him nearly to death the other day for coming to the Loyal Legion class; but we'll win in the end."

"Meanwhile are you as much interested as ever?" asked Patience, curiously.

"Oh, my!" Miss Beale gave an almost hilarious laugh. "Well, I should think so. How could I ever lose interest in the Lord's work? Why, I never even get discouraged."

"It has occurred to me, sometimes—since I have been away and met all sorts of people—that if you really were Temperance you might have more chance of success."

"If we were what?"

"Temperance in the actual meaning of the word.

You're not, you know; you're teetotalists. That is the reason you antagonise so many thousands of men who might be glad to help you with their vote otherwise. The average gentleman—and there are thousands upon thousands of him—never gets drunk, and enjoys his wine at dinner and even his whiskey and water. He doesn't see any reason why he shouldn't have it, and there isn't any. It adds to the pleasures of life. Those are the people that really represent Temperance, and naturally they have no sympathy with a movement that they consider narrow-minded and an unwarrantable intrusion."

Miss Beale shook her head vigorously. "It is a sin to touch it!" she exclaimed, "and sooner or later they will all be drunkards, every one of them. The blessing of God is not on alcohol, and it should be banished from the face of the earth."

Patience was in a perverse and almost ugly mood. "Tell me," she said, "how do you reconcile your animosity to alcohol with the story of Christ's turning the water into wine at the wedding feast?"

"It wasn't wine," said Miss Beale, triumphantly; "it was grape-juice. Wine takes days to ferment, so the water couldn't possibly have become wine all in a minute."

Patience burst into laughter. "But, Miss Beale, it was a miracle anyhow, wasn't it? If he could perform a miracle at all it would have been as easy to make wine out of water as grape-juice."

Miss Beale shook her head emphatically and set her lips. "I *know* that the Lord never would have offered wine to anybody; but grape-juice is delightful, and he probably knew it, and they called it wine. That is all there is to it."

"Oh," exclaimed Patience, forgetting the Temperance question, as Miss Beale turned into a path and walked toward the side entrance of the First Presbyterian Church, "are we going here?"

"Yes, this is just where we are going. There is a special meeting of the Y's and Christian Endeavourers of Mariaville and White Plains and two or three other places. Ah! I've caught you now, you naughty girl."

Patience turned away her face and frowned heavily. All her old dislike of religion, almost forgotten during the past two years, surged up above the impulsion of her fermenting spirit. She felt the old impatience, the old intolerance.

"Do you want me to go in there?" she asked. "I came to see you."

"Oh, you're not going to get out of it," cried Miss Beale, gayly. "And I know you better than you know yourself. I know you always wanted to give yourself to the Lord, only you are too proud."

Patience stared at her, wondering if she had so far forgotten herself as to indulge in a little joke at the expense of her idols; but Miss Beale was looking at her with kind, earnest eyes. Patience laughed, and shrugged her shoulders.

"Well, I'll go in to please you; but I hope it won't be too long, for I'm horribly hungry."

"Dear, dear! Why didn't you come a little earlier? But it won't be more than two hours, and then I'll have a hot luncheon prepared for you."

She led Patience through the large church parlour and straight up to a table, lifting a chair as she passed the front row of seats.

"I don't want to sit here," whispered Patience, hurriedly; but Miss Beale pushed her into the chair, and seated herself beside her, at the back of the table.

"I am going to preside, and you are the guest of honour," she said. "Young ladies," she continued, smiling at the rows of bright and serious faces, "I am sure you will all be glad to see Patience again. I know she is glad to see you."

Patience arose and bowed awkwardly, then sat down and tapped the floor with her foot. The young women looked surprised and pleased. One and all smiled encouragingly, sure that she had been converted at last. Many of the faces were bright with youth and even mischief; others were careworn and ageing. Not one of them but looked happy.

Patience under her calm exterior began to seethe and mutter once more. Once she almost laughed aloud as she thought of the effect upon these simple-minded girls if the hell within her were suddenly made manifest.

The meeting opened at once. Miss Beale offered a

prayer, in which she implored that they all might love the Lord the more. Hymns were sung, the Bible read, and reports by the various secretaries and treasurers. Then one serious and not unintelligent-looking woman of thirty read a platitudinous paper beginning: "Someone has said, 'The time will come when it will be the proudest boast of every man and woman to say "I am an American."' I say that the time will come when it will be the proudest boast of every man and woman to say, 'I am a Christian.'"

All regarded the reader with eyes of affection and approval. Each word Patience, in her abnormal state of mind, took as a personal insult to Intellect. She felt furiously resentful that in this Nineteenth Century with its educational facilities, its libraries full of the achievements of great masters of thought, there should be so low a standard of intellectuality in the middle classes. Even the fashionable women, frivolous as they were, were brighter, and keener to pierce outworn traditions. They might not be thinkers, but they had a species of lightning in their brain which rent superstition and gave them flash-light glimpses of life in its true proportions.

The girls began to give experiences. One had just joined the Y's, and she related with tears the story of her struggle between the World and the Church, and her thankfulness that at last she had been permitted to decide in favour of the Lord. Patience remembered her as the vapid daughter of rather wealthy parents

who in her own day had been devoted to society and young men. She was very faded. Many of the girls wept in sympathy, and Miss Beale mopped her eyes several times.

An extremely pretty girl stood up, a girl with black hair and pale-blue eyesand rich, pink colour. Patience regarded her satirically, thinking what a beauty she would be if properly gowned. Miss Beale, noting her interest, patted her hand and smiled.

"I just want to say," began the girl, with deep earnestness, "that every day of my life I have greater confidence that the Lord loves me and hears what I ask Him. You know that I write the reports of the Y. W. C. T. U., and of course I have to get them printed for nothing. So when I sit down to write them I just ask the Lord to tell me what to say and how to say it, and all the way to the office I keep asking Him to tell me what to say to the editor so that he will print it and help our great cause along. And, girls, he prints it every time, and only yesterday he said to me: 'I like your stuff because it's direct and to the point, no gush, no rhetoric—it's plain horse sense.' Now, girls, you need not think I say that to compliment myself. I just say it to prove that the Lord writes those newspaper articles, not I."

Patience put her handkerchief to her face and shook convulsively. She bit her lips to keep from laughing aloud; she wanted to scream.

Suddenly she became conscious of a deep murmur.

Supposing it to be of disapproval, she straightened her mouth and dropped her handkerchief; but her face was scarlet, her eyes full of tears. The girls were leaning forward, regarding her earnestly. Miss Beale leaned over and placed her arm about her.

"Speak," she said softly. "Don't be afraid."

"What on earth are you thinking about?" gasped Patience.

"Tell us what is in your heart," said Miss Beale, in a tremulous voice.

And, "Tell us! Tell us!" came from the girls.

"You don't know what you are saying," said Patience, freeing herself angrily. "Let me go." She was trembling with excitement. Her head felt very light. The blood was pounding in her ears. She started to her feet, meaning to rush to the door; but Miss Beale was too quick for her. She caught her firmly by the waist and led her to the middle of the space at the head of the room.

"I know she will speak," said Miss Beale. "Patience, we all feel our awful responsibility. If you speak out now, you will be saved. If your timidity overcomes you, you may go hence and never hear His knock again."

"Speak! Speak!" came with solemn emphasis from the Y's.

"Oh, well, I'll speak," cried Patience. "And suppose you hear me out. It will be only polite, since you have forced me to speak. You have always mis-

understood me. I am by no means indifferent to the God you worship. I have the most exalted respect and admiration for this tremendous creative force behind the Universe, a respect so great that I should never presume to address him as you do in your funny little egoism. Do you realise that this magnificent Being of whose essence you have not the most approximate idea, is the Creator, not only of this but of countless other worlds and systems, and furthermore of the psychic and physical laws that govern them and of the extraordinary mystery of which we are a part, and which has its most subtle expression in the Space surrounding us? And yet you, atoms, pigmies, tiny individual manifestations of a great correlative force called human nature, you presume to address this stupendous Being, and stand up and kneel down and talk to It, to imagine that It listens to your insignificant wants,—that It writes newspaper articles! Is it Christianity that has destroyed the sense of humour in its disciples?

"In each of you is a shaft from the great dominating Force—that is quite true, and it is for you to develop that force—character—and rely upon it, not upon a spiritual lover, as weak women do upon some unfortunate man. What good does all this religious sentimentality do you? Your brains are rotting. You have nothing to talk about to intelligent men. No wonder the men of small towns get away as soon as they can, and seek the intelligent women of lower strata. Men are naturally brighter than women, and girls of your

sort deliberately make yourselves as limited and colourless as you can. Go, make yourselves companions for men, if you would make the world better, if you must improve the human race. Study the subjects that interest them, that fill their life; study politics and the great questions of the day, that you may lead them to the higher ethical plane on which nature has placed you. Quit this erotic sentimentalising over an abstract being to whom you must be the profoundest joke of his civilisation—"

"Hush!" shrieked Miss Beale. For some moments Patience had been obliged to raise her voice above the angry mutterings of her audience. One or two were sobbing hysterically. Miss Beale's cry was the signal for the explosion of pent-up excitement.

"Go! Go!" cried the girls. "Go out of this church! Blasphemer! Shame! Shame!"

Patience looked out undaunted upon the sea of flushed, angry faces, which a few moments before had been all peace and love. She shrugged her shoulders, bowed to Miss Beale, who was staring at her with horrified eyes in a livid face, and walked toward the door. The girls pressed her forward, lest she should speak again.

"We have a right as churchwomen to hate you," cried one, "for we are told to hate the devil, and you are he incarnate."

Patience refused to accelerate her steps, but reached the door in a moment. As she was about to pass out

a joyous face was uplifted to hers. It belonged to a girl still sitting. Her lap was piled with loose sheets of paper. There was an excited smirch of lead on her cheek. Even as she raised her head and spoke she continued writing. "That was a corker," she whispered, "the biggest story I've had in weeks." It was Miss Merrien.

XVII.

PATIENCE was an early riser, and had usually read the "Day" through before Beverly lounged downstairs, sleepy and cross and masculine. On the morning after her day of varied experience she took the newspaper into the library and read the first page leisurely, as was her habit. The news of the world still interested her profoundly. Then she read the editorials, and, later, glanced idly at the headlines of the "stories." The following arrested her startled eye:

AN EARTHQUAKE IN MARIAVILLE!
THE GOOD PEOPLE ARE OUTRAGED!
A SENSATION BY THE BEAUTIFUL AND BRILLIANT
MRS. BEVERLY PEELE!

The story covered two thirds of a column. Patience read it three times in succession without stopping to comment. It was graphically told, much exaggerated,

and as carefully climaxed as dramatic fiction. And it was interesting reading. Patience decided that if it had not been about herself she should have given it more than passing attention. Her beauty and grace and elegance, her grand air, were described with enthusiasm. Every possible point of contrast was made to the serious and unfashionable Y's.

At first Patience was horrified. She wondered what Mr. and Mrs. Peele would say. Beverly's comments were not within the limitations of doubt.

"I'm in for it," she thought. Then she smiled. She felt the same thrill she had experienced when the men looked askance at her after her assault upon her mother. The Ego ever lifts its head at the first caress, and quickly becomes as insatiable as a child for sweets. Patience glanced at the article to note how many times her name—in small capitals—sprang forth to meet her eyes. She imagined Bourke reading it, and Mrs. Gallatin, and Mrs. Lafarge, and many others, and wondered if strangers would find it interesting; then, suddenly, she threw back her head and laughed aloud.

"What fools we mortals be!" she thought. "And the President of the United States has dozens of paragraphs written about him every day. And actors and writers are paragraphed *ad nauseam*. If a woman is run over in the street she has a column, and if she goes to a hotel and commits suicide, she has two, and is a raving beauty. Rosita is persecuted for stories. The Ego ought to have its ears boxed every morning, as

some old-fashioned people switch their children. Well, here comes Beverly."

Her husband entered, and for the first time in many months she sprang to her feet and gave him a little peck on his cheek. He was so surprised that he forgot to pick up the newspaper, and followed her at once into the dining-room. During the meal she talked of his horses and his farm, and even offered to take a drive with him. He was going to White Plains to look at some blooded stock which was to be sold at auction, and promptly invited her to accompany him; but her diplomacy had its limits, and she declined. However, he went from the table in high good-humour. When she left him in the library, a few moments later, he was arranging the scattered sheets of the "Day," without his accustomed comments upon "the infernal manner in which a woman always left a newspaper."

Patience went up to her room and wrote a note of apology to Miss Beale. She was half way through a long letter to Hal when she heard Beverly bounding up the stair three steps at a time.

"The cyclone struck Peele Manor at 10.25," she said, looking at the clock. "Sections of the fair—"

Beverly burst in without ceremony.

"What the hell does this mean?" he cried, brandishing the newspaper. His dilating nostrils were livid. The rest of his face was almost black.

"Beverly, you will certainly have apoplexy or burst

a blood-vessel," said his wife, solicitously. "Think of those that love you and preserve yourself—"

"Those that love me be damned! The idea of my wife—*my wife*—being the heroine of a vulgar newspaper story! Her name out in a headline! Mrs. Beverly Peele! My God!"

"God was the cause of the whole trouble," said Patience, flippantly. "I thought the young women were entirely too intimate with him. The spectacle conjured of The Almighty with his sleeves rolled up grinding out copy at five dollars per column was too much for me. I have the most profound admiration and respect for the Deity, and felt called upon to defend him—the others seemed so unconscious of insult—"

"This is no subject for a joke," cried Beverly, who had sworn steadily through these remarks. "I don't care a hang if you had a reason or not for making a public speech—Christ!—it's enough that you made it, that your name's in the paper—my wife's name! What will my father and mother say?"

"They will not swear. A few of the Peeles are decently well bred."

"No one ever gave them cause to swear before. You've turned this family upside down since you came into it. You've been the ruin of my life. I wish to God I'd never seen you."

"I sincerely wish you hadn't. What had you in-

tended to make of your life that I have interfered with?"

"If I'd married a woman who loved me I'd have been a better man."

"I wonder how many weak men have said that since the world began! You were twenty-six when I married you, and I cannot see that there has been any change in kind since, although there certainly is in degree. If you had married the ordinary little domestic woman, you would have been happier, but you would not have been better, for you possess neither soul nor intelligence. But I am perfectly willing to give you a chance for happiness. Give me my freedom, and look about you for a doll—"

"Do you mean to say that you want a divorce?"

"I think you know just how much I do."

"Well, you won't get it—by God! Do you understand that? You've no cause, and you'll not get any."

"There should be a law made for women who—who—well, like myself."

Her husband was incapable of understanding her. "Well, you just remember that," he said. "You don't get a divorce, and you keep out of the newspapers, or you'll be sorry," and he slammed the door and strode away.

A quarter of an hour after Patience heard the wheels of his cart. At the same time the train stopped below the slope. A few moments later she saw Miss Merrien

come up the walk. The maid brought up the visitor's card, and with it a note from Mr. Field.

DEAR MRS. BEVERLY [it read],—Forgive me—but you are a woman of destiny, or I haven't studied people sixty years for nothing. I chose to be the first—the scent of the old war-horse for news, you know. Peele will be furious, but I can't bother about a trifle like that. Just give this young woman an interview, and oblige your old friend

J. E. F.

Patience started to go downstairs, then turned to the mirror and regarded herself attentively. She looked very pretty, remarkably so, as she always did when the pink was in her cheeks; but her morning gown was plain and not particularly becoming. She changed it, after some deliberation, for a house-robe of pearl-grey silk with a front of pale pink chiffon hanging straight from a collar of cut steel. The maid had brought her some pink roses from the greenhouse; she fastened one in the coil of her soft, pale hair. Then she smiled at her reflection, shook out her train, and rustled softly down the stair.

Miss Merrien exclaimed with feminine enthusiasm as she entered the library.

"Oh, you are the loveliest woman to write about," she said. "I do a lot of society work, and I am so tired of describing the conventional beauty. And that gown! I'm going to describe every bit of it. Did it come from Paris?"

"Yes," said Patience, amused at her immediate suc-

cess. "My mother-in-law brought it to me last summer —but perhaps you had better not mention Mrs. Peele in your story."

"Well, I won't, of course, if you don't want me to. I have written the story about La Rosita for the Sunday 'Day,' and I did not hint at your identity. It made a good story, but not as good as the one about you. Mr. Field wrote me a note this morning, complimenting me, and told me to come up here and interview you. I hope you don't mind very much."

"I haven't the faintest idea whether I do or not. How do you do it?"

"Well, you see, I'll just ask you questions and you answer them, and I'll put it all down in shorthand, and then when I go to the office I'll thresh it into shape. You can be sure that I won't say anything that isn't pleasant, for I really never admired anyone half so much."

"Very well, you interview me, and then I'll interview you. I have some questions to ask also."

"I'll tell you anything you like. This story, by the way, is to be in the Sunday issue on the Woman's Page. Now we'll begin. Were you always an unbeliever? Tell me exactly what are your religious opinions."

"Oh, dear me! You are not going to write a serious analysis of me?"

"Yes, but I'll give it the light touch so that it won't bore anybody. It is to be called 'A Society Woman

Who Thinks,'- and will be read with interest all over America."

"But I am not a society woman."

"Well, you're a swell, and that's the same thing, for this purpose anyhow. The Gardiner Peeles are out of sight, and I have heard lots of times how beautifully you entertain in summer and how charmingly you gown yourself. Tell me first—what do you think of this everlasting woman question? I hate the very echo of the thing, but we'll have to touch on it."

"Oh, I haven't given much thought to it, except as a phase of current history. One thing is positive, I think: we must adjust our individual lives without reference to any of the problems of the moment,—Womanism, Socialism, the Ethical Question, the Marriage Question, and all the others that are everlasting raging. He that would be happy must deal with the great primal facts of life—and these facts will endure until human nature is no more. Moreover, however much she may reason, nothing can eradicate the strongest instinct in woman—that she can find happiness only through some man."

"Good," said Miss Merrien. "I'd have thought the same thing if I'd ever had time. Now tell me if you have any religion at all."

"I suppose I should be called an anarchist. Don't be alarmed: I mean the philosophical or spiritual anarchist, not these poor maniarchists that are merely an objectionable variety of lunatics. The religious situation

is this, I think: Jesus Christ does not satisfy the intellectual needs of the Nineteenth Century. And yet, indisputably, the religionists are happier than the multiplying scores that could no more continue in the old delusion than they could worship idols or torture the flesh. Civilisation needs a new prophet, and he must be an anarchist,—one who will teach the government of self by self, the government of man's nature by will, which in its turn is subservient to the far-seeing brain. Human nature is anarchic in its essence. The child never was born that was brought to bend to authority without effort. We are still children, or we should not need laws and governments."

"Wait till I get that down."

"Of course these are only individual opinions. I don't claim any value for them, and should never have thought of airing them if you hadn't asked me. For my part I'm glad I live in this imperfect chaotic age. When we can all do exactly as we please and won't even remember how to want to do anything wrong—Awful!"

"But you said the advanced thinkers needed this new religion to make them happy."

"Their happiness will consist in the tremendous effort to reach the difficult goal. That will take centuries, just as the spiritualised socialism of Jesus Christ has taken twenty centuries, and only imperfectly possessed one third of the globe. When anarchy is a cold hard fact—well, I suspect the anarchists will suddenly

discover that *ennui* is in their vitals, and will gently yawn each other to death. Then the tadpoles will begin over again; or perhaps there will then be mental and moral developments that we in our present limitations cannot conceive. Haven't you had enough?"

"No, no. I've a dozen questions more."

Miss Merrien, like all good newspaper reporters, was an amateur lawyer and a harmless hypnotist. In an hour she had extracted Patience's views of society, books, dress, public questions, and the actors in the great national theatre, the Capitol at Washington.

"Oh, this is magnificent," she announced, when the pages had been folded. "Now can I look at the house?"

"We will have luncheon first. No, don't protest. I am delighted. Mr. Peele is away for the day, otherwise I fear you would not have had this interview."

"Oh, you don't believe in the submission of wives, then?"

"I've never thought much about it," said Patience, indifferently. "There is too much fuss made about it all. When a man commands his wife to do a thing she does not care to do, and when a woman does what she knows will displease her husband, it is time for them to separate."

"Oh, that is too simple. It wouldn't do to reduce the woman question to a rule of three. What would all the reformers do? And the poor polemical

novelists! Oh, these are the famous portraits, I suppose?"

"You can look at them if the luncheon is bad," said Patience, as they took their seats at table. "I'm not a very good housekeeper, although I actually did take some lessons of Miss Mairs. And sometimes I forget to order luncheon. I did to-day."

But the luncheon proved to be a very good one, and Miss Merrien did it justice, while Patience explained the portraits. Afterwards she showed her guest over the lower part of the house. Then they went back to the library, and Patience had her interview.

"Tell me exactly how does a woman begin on a newspaper?" she asked.

"Oh, different ones have different experiences," said Miss Merrien, vaguely. "Sometimes you have letters, and are put on as a fashion or society reporter, or to get interviews with famous women, or to go and ask prominent people their opinion on a certain subject —for a symposium, you know; like 'What Would You do if You Knew that the World was to End in Three Days?' or, 'Is Society Society?' I have written dozens of symposiums. Sometimes you do free-lance work, just pick up what you can and trust to luck to catch on. But of course you must have the nose for news. I was at a *matinée* one day and sat in front of two society women. Between the acts they talked about a prominent woman of their set who was getting a divorce from her husband so quietly that no newspaper

had suspected it. They also joked about the fact that her lawyer was an old lover. I knew this was a tip, and a big one. I wrote all the names on my cuff, and before the *matinée* was over I was down at the 'Day' and had turned in my tip to the City editor. He sent a reporter to the lawyer to bluff him into admitting the truth. The next day we had a big story, and after that the editor gave me work regularly."

"How much do you make a week?"

"Sometimes forty, sometimes not twenty; but I average pretty well and get along. Still, when you have to lay by for sickness and vacations, and put about one half on your back it doesn't amount to much. You see, a newspaper woman must dress well, must make a big bluff. If she doesn't look successful she won't be, to say nothing of the fact that she couldn't get inside a smart house if she looked shabby. And then she's got to eat good nourishing food, or she never could stand the work. Of course there's got to be economy somewhere, so I live in a hall bedroom and make my own coffee in the morning. Still, I don't complain, for I do like the work. If I had to go back home I'd ruin the happiness of the entire family."

"What do you look forward to?—I mean what ultimate? You don't want to be a reporter always, I suppose. Everybody is striving for some top notch."

"Oh, maybe I'll become Sunday editor, or I might fall in with somebody that wanted to start a woman's newspaper, or magazine—you never can tell. There

aren't many good berths for women. Of course there are a good many very bright newspaper women, and it's a toss up who goes to the top."

"You don't seem to take matrimony into consideration."

"Oh, I don't deny I get so tired sometimes that I'd be only too glad to have a man take care of me. I guess we all look forward to that, more or less. I think I'd always work, but not so hard. It would make all the difference in the world if you knew someone else was paying the bills. And then, you see, we go to pieces in eight or ten years. A man is good for hard newspaper work until he's forty, but we women are made to be taken care of, and that's a fact. We take turns having nervous prostration. I haven't had it yet, but I'm looking cheerfully forward to it."

"Now I want to tell you," said Patience, "that I am going to be a newspaper woman."

"Oh, nonsense, Mrs. Peele! Excuse me, but you belong here. Your *rôle* is that of the *châtelaine* in exquisite French gowns and an air half of languor, half of pride. You were not made for work."

"That is very pretty, but I suspect you don't want to lose me for copy."

"Well, I don't deny it. I wish you'd keep the ball rolling, and give me a story a month."

"I'm afraid I've given you my last. In a week or two I shall be a *châtelaine* in a pink and grey gown no

longer, but a humble applicant for work in Mr. Field's office."

"Is it possible that you mean it?"

"Do I look as if I were joking?"

"You don't look unhappy—Pardon me—but—but—does he beat you?"

"Oh, no," said Patience, laughing outright, "he doesn't beat me. I have better grounds for desertion than that. Do you think you would do me a favour? I shall have to slip away. He would never let me go with a trunk. I am going to ask you to let me send you a box of things every few days. That will excite no comment among the servants, as we are always sending clothes to the poor. May I?"

"Of course you may. I'll do everything I can to help you. But—I can't imagine you out of this environment. Don't you hate to give it up,—all this luxury, this ease, this atmosphere?"

"Yes, I like it all. I'm a sybarite, fast enough. But I've weighed it all in the balance, and Peele Manor stays up. I have a hundred dollars or so, and that will last me for a time. I'll give it to you to take care of for me. I never was wealthy, but I have no idea of economy. I don't think I should like a hall room though. Are the others so very expensive?"

"They are if you have a good address, and that's very important. And you want to be in a house with a handsome parlour."

"I have no friends,—none that will come to see me."

"Oh, you'll make friends. You're an awfully sweet woman. I can't bear to think— Well, there's no use saying any more about it. I expect you're the sort that knows your own mind. I should like to keep on seeing you a great lady, but if you can't be a happy one I suppose you are right. Well, I'll stand by you through thick and thin, and I'll show you the ropes. Now I must get back to the office and work up my story. Here's my address. There's a spare room on the floor above mine. If you're in dead earnest I'd better take it right away; then I can unpack your things and hang them up. But—but—do you really mean it?"

"Of course I do."

"You know Mr. Field personally, don't you?"

"Very well, indeed; and he told me when I was sixteen that he should make a newspaper woman of me."

"Oh, well, then, you'll have a lot of push, and your road won't be as hard as some—not by a long short. About six out of every ten newspaper women either go to the wall or to the bad. It is a mixture of knack and pluck as much as brains that carries the favoured minority through. You have brains and pluck, and you'll have push, so you ought to get there. About the knack of course I can't tell. Good-bye."

XVIII.

THE evening mail brought from Mrs. Peele to her son a note which he read with a rumbling accompaniment, then tossed to Patience.

"Do you intend to permit your wife to disgrace your family?" it read. "If I had my way that abominable paper, the 'Day,' should never enter this house—nor any other paper that dealt in personalities. I literally writhe every time I see my name—your father's honoured name—in the society columns. You may, then, perhaps, imagine my feelings when your father handed me the 'Day' this morning with his finger on that outrageous column. He was speechless with wrath, and will personally call Mr. Field to account. I am in bed with a violent headache, in consequence, and dictating this letter to Honora. But although I deeply feel for you, my beloved son, I must *insist* that you assert your authority with your wrong-headed wife and command her to refrain from disgracing this family. I don't wish to reproach you, but I cannot help saying that it is *always* a dangerous experiment to marry beneath one. This girl is not one of us, she never can be; for, not to mention that we know nothing whatever of her family, she comes from that dreadful savage *new* Western country. In spite of the fact that she has been clever enough to superficially adapt herself to our ways, I always knew that she would break out somewhere—I always said so to Honora. But I don't wish to add to your own sorrow. I know how you, with all your proud Peele reserve, must feel. Only, my son, use your authority in the future."

Patience finished this letter with a disagreeable lowering of the brows. She made no comment, however,

but opened a book and refused to converse with her husband.

On Sunday morning she found three columns on the Woman's Page of the "Day" devoted to her beauty, her intellect, her gowns, and her opinions. It was embellished with a photograph of Peele Manor and a sketch of herself, which Miss Merrien had evidently made from memory. When Beverly came down she handed the newspaper to him at once, to read the story with the raw temper of early morning. She hoped that Mrs. Peele would read it in similar conditions.

After he had gone through the headlines he let the newspaper fall to the floor, and stared at her with a face so livid that for a moment she felt as if looking upon the risen dead. Then gradually it blackened, only the nostrils remaining white.

"So you deliberately defy me?" he articulated.

"Yes," she said, watching him narrowly. She thought that he might strike her.

"You did it on purpose to drive me crazy?"

"I had no object whatever, except that it pleased me to be interviewed. Understand at once that I shall do exactly as I please in all things. This is not the country for petty household tyrants. I don't doubt there are many men in this world whom I should be glad to treat with deference and respect if I happened to be married to one of them; but with men like you there is only one course to take. I have asked you to let me live abroad. If you consent to this, it may save

you a great deal of trouble in the future; for, I repeat, I shall in all things do exactly as I choose."

"We'll see whether you will or not," he roared. "You'll do as I say, or I'll lock you up."

"Oh, you will not lock me up. You are way behind your times, Beverly. There is no law in the United States to compel me to obey you."

"I'll stop your allowance. You'll never get another cent from me.

"That has nothing whatever to do with it. Now, I ask you for the last time, Will you let me travel?"

"No!" he shouted, and he rushed from the room.

BOOK IV.

BOOK IV.

I.

Miss Merrien lived in West Forty-fourth Street, near Broadway. Ten days after her visit to Peele Manor Patience rang the door-bell of the house that was to be her new home, one of a long impersonal row.

The maid that answered her ring handed her a note from Miss Merrien, and conducted her up to a hall room on the third floor. Patience closed the door, and looked about her with the sensation of the shipwrecked. For a moment she was strongly tempted to flee back to Peele Manor. The room was about eight feet square, and furnished with a folding-bed, which was likewise a bureau, and with a washstand, a table, and two chairs. The furniture and carpet were new, and there were pretty blue and white curtains on the window. Nevertheless the tiny room with its modern contrivances was the symbol of poverty and struggle and an entirely new existence. Her second impulse was to sit down on a chair and cry; but she set her teeth, and read Miss Merrien's note instead.

I am so sorry not to be able to meet you [it read]; but I am a slave, you know. Before I was out of bed this morning I received an assignment to go to a woman's club meeting at eleven. But I'll get back in time to go down to the shop with you. Don't get blue—if you can help it. Remember that every woman feels the same way when she first makes the break for self-support; and that your chances are better than those of most. There's a little restaurant round the corner—the maid will show you—where you can get your luncheon. *Au revoir.* I'm so glad the sun is out.

ANNA CHETWYNDE MERRIEN.

P. S. Your clothes are in the closet in the hall. The key is in the washstand drawer.

Patience felt in better cheer after reading Miss Merrien's kindly greeting, but the day dragged along very heavily. She went out and bought all the newspapers, and studied them attentively for hints; but they did not tell her inexperience anything, and after a time she let them fall to the floor and sat staring at the blank windows opposite. For the first time doubts assailed her. She had been so full of young confidence, and pride in her brains and health and courage, that she had not regarded the issue of her struggle with the world in the light of a problem; but face to face with the practical details, she felt short of breath and weak in the knees.

At two o'clock Miss Merrien came in, looking very tired. There were black scoops under her eyes, and the lines about her mouth were strongly accentuated. But she smiled brightly as Patience rose to greet her.

"Well, you are here," she said. "I changed my

mind fifty times about your coming, but on the whole I thought you would. Fortunately I have nothing on hand for this afternoon. I'll rest, and then go down with you to the shop. Oh, I am so tired, my dear. Can I lie down on your bed awhile?"

"I shall be delighted to learn how to open it," said Patience, who was wondering if her fair face was to become scooped and lined.

Miss Merrien deftly manipulated the bed, loosened her frock, and flung herself full length.

"I spent all day yesterday and half the night tramping over Brooklyn hunting up facts in the case of that girl who was found dead in a tenement-house bed in a grand ball gown. A great story that, but it has done me up. Tell me—how do you feel?"

"Oh, I'm glad I'm here, but I wish it was six months from now."

"Of course you do. That's the way we all feel. But you'll soon swing into place, and be too busy to think. I do wish you could get work in the office, so that you could keep regular hours and meals, and not lose your good looks; but there's no berth of that sort. I tell you it is a sad day when a girl under twenty-five sees the lines coming. The Revolting Sisterhood say that the next century is to be ours; but I doubt it. Men lighten our burdens a little now, but I'm afraid they'll hate us if we worry and supplant them any further. Well, I'm going to take a nap. Wake me promptly at 3.10."

She closed her eyes and fell asleep immediately. The lines grew fainter as she slept, and the hair fell softly about her face. Patience reflected gratefully that three months of absolute leisure and peace of mind would give back to the girl all her freshness and rounded contours. At ten minutes past three she awakened her. Miss Merrien sat up with a sigh."

"I feel better, though. Cultivate those cat-naps. They refresh you wonderfully. Now, we'll go."

II.

THEY went down town on the Elevated, leaving it at Park Row. Patience was so much interested in the great irregular mass of buildings surrounding City Hall Square, at the dense throngs packing the crooked side-streets, at the fakirs with their nonsensical wares, at the bewildering array of gilt newspaper names on the rows and stories of polished windows, that she forgot her errand for the moment, and was nearly run over.

"Yes, this is the heart of New York, sure enough," assented Miss Merrien. "All those big buildings over there are on the famous Newspaper Row. Brooklyn Bridge is just behind. This is the Post Office on the right, and that flat building in the square is the City Hall. I tell you when you get down here, the rest of

New York, including all the smart folk, seems pretty insignificant."

"Oh," exclaimed Patience, with a sudden sinking of the heart, "there is the 'Day' building."

"That is our shop. Now, brace up."

Patience needed the admonition. She forgot City Hall Park. All her doubts returned, with others in their wake. She knew something of the snobbery of the world. As Mrs. Beverly Peele she had been an object of respectful interest to Mr. Field. What would she be as an applicant for work? True, he had been kind to her when she was a small nobody, but that might have been merely a caprice.

They climbed up two narrow stairs in an ugly old building, and entered a large gas-lit room full of desks. Many young men were writing or moving about; several were in their shirt-sleeves.

"This is the City room," said Miss Merrien, "and these are the reporters. Those men in that little room there are the editors and editorial writers. Mr. Field's room is just beyond. Now send your card in by this boy. The Chief's harder to see than the President of the United States, but I guess he'll see you."

Patience gave the boy her card, and at the end of half an hour, during which she was much stared at by some of the men and totally ignored by others, the boy returned and conducted her to Mr. Field's office.

It was a typical editor's den of the old-fashioned type. A big desk covered with papers, a revolving chair, and

one other chair completed the furniture. A large cat was walking about, switching its tail. The floor was bare. The light straggled down between the tall buildings surrounding, and entered through small windows. It was Mr. Field's pride to have the greatest newspaper and the most unpretentious "shop" in the United States.

He rose as Patience entered, his eyes twinkling.

"Well," he said, as he handed her the extra chair, "there's a mighty row on, isn't there? Peele has been here, and now we do not speak as we pass by. But we hadn't had a good woman sensation for a month. I tried to explain that to Peele, but it didn't seem to impress him. I suppose you've come to beg for mercy."

"No—I haven't come for that."

"Why, what is the matter? I never saw you look the least bit rattled before. You are always the young queen with a court of us old fellows at your feet. But tell me; you know there's nothing I wouldn't do for you."

Patience drew a long breath of relief.

"Oh, you make it easier—I've been horribly frightened. But I'll get to the point—I suppose you're very busy down here. Can I have ten minutes?"

He laughed. "We are usually what you might call busy in this office, but you may have twenty minutes. Take your time."

"Well, it's this: I've left Peele Manor for good and all, and I want to be a newspaper woman."

Mr. Field's shaggy white brows rushed up his forehead. His black eyes expanded.

"My God! What did you make such a break as that for?"

"There are many reasons. I can't give them all. But all the same I've left, and I'm not going back."

"Well, your reasons must be good, for you had a delightful position, and you became it. Are you sure you are not acting rashly?"

"I've thought and thought and thought about it. I can't understand why I didn't leave before. I suppose my ideas and intentions didn't crystallise until I met Miss Merrien. She has been very kind. I sent my clothes to her by degrees; she engaged a room for me in her house; we are going to cook together; and I have given her what money I have to take care of."

"Well, well, you have acted deliberately. I don't know that I am so much surprised, after all, and I'll say nothing to persuade you to go back. I respect your courage and independence, and I'll do all I can. I haven't the slightest idea what you can do, but we'll find out." He leaned forward and patted her hand. Patience had one moment of painful misgiving, but again she had misjudged him. "If you get discouraged, just remember that the old man at the helm is your friend and won't let you go under."

"I'm sure you're awfully good," said Patience, tears

of contrition and gratitude in her eyes. "I knew you would."

Mr. Field touched a bell. A boy entered.

"If Mr. Steele is still in the office ask him to step here," said the chief.

"Steele is the editor of the Evening 'Day,'" he explained, "and has a remarkable faculty for discovering other people's abilities."

Patience expected to see a man of middle years and businesslike demeanour. She stared in amazement as a young man under thirty entered and was presented. He was closely built, but held himself carelessly. His smooth, rather square face was very pale, and despite the irregularity of feature, bore an odd resemblance to the Greek fauns. The mouth was large and full, the eyes large, dark-blue, and very cold. His fashionable attire accentuated the antiquity of his face and head.

"Mr. Steele," said Mr. Field, "this is Mrs. Beverly Peele, of whom you have heard so much lately. She has made up her mind to support herself. When she was a little girl I told her that I should one day make a newspaper woman of her, and she has come to hold me to my word—much to my satisfaction. I put her in your hands, and feel confident you will make a success of her."

Patience expected to see a look of blank surprise cross the young editor's face, but she did not know the modern newspaper youth. Mr. Steele could not have displayed less emotion had the new-comer been a young

woman with letters from Posy County, Illinois. He merely bowed to her, then to his chief. Patience rose at once.

"I won't keep you," she said to Mr. Field. "I'll only thank you again, and promise to work as hard as Miss Merrien."

"I haven't the slightest doubt of your success. Always remember that," said Mr. Field. Patience saw Mr. Steele's eyebrow give a slight involuntary jerk; but it was immediately controlled, and he bowed her through the door.

"We had better go upstairs to the evening room," he said. "There is no one there at present."

Patience followed him up a precipitous stairway into a walled-off section of the composing-room.

"Sit down," he said politely, but Patience for the first time in her life felt terrified and humble. This young man, of whom she had never heard before, had the air of a superior being, omnipotent in her destiny. His manner conveyed that he was not one whit impressed by the fact that she had stepped down from the Sacred Reservation, took not the faintest interest in her as a pretty woman. She was merely a young person particularly recommended by his chief, and as such it was his duty to give her consideration.

He took a chair opposite her own, and she felt as if those classic, guileless eyes were exploring her innermost brain.

"What can you do?" he asked coldly.

"Oh, nothing," she said desperately, "absolutely nothing. I suppose you feel like remarking that the 'Day' is not a kindergarten."

"Well, it certainly is not. Nevertheless, as Mr. Field thinks that you have ability, and wishes you to write for his paper, I, of course, shall do all I can to abet him. I shall begin by giving you a few words of advice. Have you a good memory; or should you prefer to write them down?"

He spoke very slowly, as if he had a deep respect for the value of words.

"I have read a great deal," said Patience, proudly, "and my memory is very good indeed."

There was a faint twitching of one corner of Mr. Steele's mouth, but he continued in the same business-like tone:—

"Read the 'Day' through carefully, morning and evening. Observe the style in which facts are presented, and the general tone and atmosphere of the paper. Cultivate that general style, not your own. Remember that you are not on this newspaper to make an individual reputation, but to become, if possible, a unit of a harmonious whole, and to give the public the best news in the style to which this newspaper has accustomed it. When you are sent on an assignment remember that you are to gather facts—facts. Keep your eyes open, and cultivate the faculty of observation for all it is worth. When you have gathered these facts put them into as picturesque a shape as you choose—or as you can. But

no rhetoric, no rhapsodies, no flights, no theories. If the facts admit of being treated humorously, treat them in that way, by all means,—that is, if you can imitate a man's humour, not a woman's flippancy. A good many women can. And never forget that it must not be your humour but the inherent humour of the subject. Be concise. When you feel disposed to say a thing in ten words say it in five. That is all I can think of at present. Be here at eight o'clock to-morrow, and I will give you an assignment."

He rose, and Patience felt herself dismissed. She sat for a minute looking at him with angry eyes. Not even in the early days of her married life had she been so patronised as by this unknown young man. She felt as if he had plucked her individuality out with his thumb and finger and contemptuously tossed it aside.

"Is anything the matter?" he asked indifferently, although one corner of his mouth twitched again.

"No!" Patience sprang to her feet and ran down the stair, at the imminent risk of breaking her neck. Miss Merrien was waiting for her.

"Why, what on earth is the matter?" she exclaimed.

"Oh, let us get out into the air! Come, and then I'll tell you."

But they were not able to converse until seated in the Elevated Train. Then Patience exclaimed with an accent of cutting sarcasm,—

"Who, *who* is Mr. Steele?"

Miss Merrien smiled broadly. "Oh, I see. Did he

patronise you? You must get used to editors. Remember they are monarchs in a small way, and love their power—the more because their dominion is confined within four walls. But Morgan Steele is one of the kindest men in the office. I'd rather work for him than for anyone. He puts on an extra amount of side on account of his youth, but the reporters all adore him. He won't keep an incompetent man two days, and during those two days the man's life is a burden; but he is always doing good turns to the boys he likes. When you know him you'll like him."

"I think him an insolent young cub, and if I didn't hate to bother Mr. Field I'd refuse to write for him. What on earth is a youngster like that in such a responsible position for?"

"Oh, my dear, this is the young man's epoch. Just cast your eyes over the United States and even England, and think of the men under thirty that are editors and authors and special writers and famous artists and leaders of enterprises. They are burnt out at forty, but they begin to play a brilliant part in their early twenties. I heard a man say the other day of another man who is only twenty-six and supposed to be ambitious: 'Well, he'd better hump himself. He's no chicken.' A man feels a failure nowadays if he hasn't distinguished himself before thirty."

"They are certainly distinguished for conceit."

"Oh, when you get used to newspaper men you'll like them better than any men you've known. What

is objectionable is counteracted by their brains and their intimate and wonderfully varied knowledge of life. A newspaper man who is at the same time a gentleman, is charming. It is true they have no respect for anybody nor anything. They believe in no woman's virtue and no man's honesty—under stress. Their kindness —like Morgan Steele's—is half cynical, and they look upon life as a thing to be lived out in twenty years—and then dry-rot or suicide. But no men know so well how to enjoy life, know so thoroughly its resources, or have all their senses so keenly developed, particularly the sense of humour, which keeps them from making fools of themselves. No man can feel so strongly for a day, and that after all is the philosophy of life. All this makes them very interesting, although, I must confess, I should hate to marry one. It seems to be a point of honour among them to be unfaithful to their wives; however, I imagine, the real reason is that no one woman has sufficient variety in her to satisfy a man who sees life from so many points of view daily that he becomes a creature of seven heads and seven hearts and seven ideals. Now, tell me all about your interviews with Mr. Field and Morgan Steele."

Patience told the tale, and Miss Merrien raised her eyebrows at its conclusion. "Well, you need not lie awake nights trembling for the future. You are in for push and no mistake. If the Chief has taken you under his wing in that fashion you can be sure that Morgan Steele will work you for all that is in you, whether he

wants to or not." Suddenly she laughed, and leaning over looked quizzically at Patience. "You vain girl," she said, "you are piqued because Morgan Steele did not succumb as other men—including Mr. Field—have done to your beauty and charm. But I'll tell you this, by way of consolation: it is a point of etiquette—or prudence—among editors never to pay the most commonplace attentions to, or manifest the slightest interest in the women of the office. It would not only lead to endless complications, but would impair the lordlings' dignity: in other words, they would be guyed. So cheer up. You haven't gone off since this morning. I see three men staring at you in true Elevated style."

Patience laughed. "Well, I will admit that I have no respect whatever for a man that is unappreciative of the charms of woman. I'd like to give Mr. Steele a lesson, but I won't. I wouldn't condescend. I'll be as businesslike as he is. He knew why I was angry to-day, I am afraid, but he won't see me angry again. Why is Mr. Field so much nicer?"

"Oh, he owns the paper."

III.

PATIENCE'S indignation had worn itself out by bed-time. When Miss Merrien left her for the night she locked her door and spread her arms out with an exultant sense of freedom. She seemed to feel the ugly weight of the past two years fall from her, and to hear it go clattering down the quiet streets. Her sense of humour and the liveliness of her mind had saved her from morbidity at any time, although she had not escaped cynicism. She now felt that she could turn her back squarely on the past, that she was not a woman whose mistakes and dark experiences would corrode the brain and spirit, ruining present and future. She could not make the same mistake again; and it was better to have made it in early youth when the etchery of experience eats the copper of the ego more lightly. The future seemed to her to be full of infinite possibilities. She could be her own fastidious, dreaming, idealising self again. New friends dotted the dusk like stars. She felt ten years away from the man to whom she had nodded a careless good-bye that morning. A vague pleasurable loneliness assailed her, the instinct of plurality. Then she laughed suddenly and went to bed.

The next morning, at eight o'clock, after a cup of black coffee to stiffen her nerves, she presented herself

in the evening-room of the "Day." Two men and a woman were writing at little tables. Mr. Steele in his shirt-sleeves was at his desk, reading copy. She sat down, priding herself that her face was as impassive as his own. In a few moments he called her to his desk.

"You have read in the newspapers, I suppose, of this crusade of Dr. Broadhead, the fashionable Presbyterian clergyman, against the voting of Immigrants?" he asked.

"Of course."

"Well, he is doing his best to get the women of New York to help him, and is holding his first meeting this morning in Cooper Union—eleven-thirty. One of our best men will go to report the addresses, but I want you to go and sit in the audience, and observe how many fashionable women are there, what they wear, and what degree of interest they appear to take in the proceedings. Above all, I want you to keep your eyes and ears open for any significant fact which may or may not appear. It usually does. That is all.—Well, what do you want?" This to the office-boy.

Patience went slowly downstairs, feeling as if she had been sent out to discover the North Pole with a chart and a row-boat. When she reached Cooper Union, two hours later, and found herself for the moment an integer of one of the many phases of current history, she forgot the agonising travail of the "news

sense," and became so deeply interested that she observed the many familiar faces abstractedly, and, later, "faked" their costumes.

She hurried to her room before the meeting was over and wrote her "story." It concluded thus:—

"Some four hundred women were present, at half-past eleven in the morning; the hour indicating that they were women of leisure, which in its turn presupposes a large measure of education and refinement, and a general superiority over the toiling millions. They were very enthusiastic. When Dr. Broadhead entered the applause was deafening. They interrupted him every few minutes. When he sat down, and Mr. Lionel Chambers came forward he, too, was warmly welcomed, for his popularity is well established. He smiled, and began something like this:—

"'Ladies: Dr. Broadhead has left me little to say. I being somewhat versed in politics, however, in other words, in hard fighting with the enemy, he believes that I may be able to give you a little useful advice.' (Applause and cries of 'Yes! Yes!') 'Now, ladies, there are several points upon which I must ask your attention.' (No man ever had more serious attention.) 'I will check them off in detail. First of all, ladies, my advice to you is to—' (every ear went forward)—'is—to—pray.'

"He paused. There was an intense and disgusted silence, with the exception of one or two muttered exclamations of impatience. *There were just four hundred*

women in the city of New York who were beyond that sort of thing. He saw his mistake at once, blundered on confusedly, recovered himself, and gave them much sound, practical advice which they received with every mark of gratitude."

She hastened down to the office, her eyes shining with the proud delight of authorship. Steele looked busier than anyone she had ever seen, but he asked sharply:

"Got anything?"

"Yes."

"Let me see it. Skip the description part."

She handed him the latter part of her story, and he ran his eye hastily over it. A gleam shot from his eyes, but he compressed his lips.

"That's not bad—but I don't know that I dare print it. The religious hypocrisy of this country beats that of England, strange as it may appear. However, I'll think it over. Come down to-morrow morning."

The article was printed, and the result was a shower of protesting letters from clergymen and religious women. Patience was sent to interview a number of representative women, of various spheres of life, on the subject, and found herself fairly launched. She hardly had time to realise whether she liked the work or not, but when she was not too tired, concluded that she did. As this phase wore off, she developed considerable enthusiasm, and felt her bump of curiosity enlarge.

She practically forgot the past, except to wonder occasionally that she heard nothing from the Peeles. Upon her arrival in New York, on the morning of her departure from Peele Manor, she had mailed a note to Beverly, which merely announced that she had left him, never to return. He was the sort of a man to put the matter in the hands of a detective, but so far—and the weeks were growing into a month—he had given no sign of any kind. She cared little for the cause of his silence, however; she was too thankful for the fact. Occasionally Steele gave her a brief word of praise, and she was more delighted than she had ever been at the admiration of man.

IV.

PATIENCE sprang out of bed, full of the mere joy of living. She felt as happy as a wild creature of the woods, and for no reason whatever. She longed for Rosita's voice that she might carol, and wondered if it were possible that she had ever thought herself the most miserable of women. The small room would not hold her, and she went out and took a long walk in the sharp white air; it was Sunday, and she was not obliged to go to the office.

When she returned, the servant told her that a gentleman awaited her in the parlour. She turned cold,

but went defiantly in. The visitor was Mr. Field, and the revulsion of feeling was so great, and her exuberance of spirits so undiminished, that she ran forward, threw her arms about his neck, and kissed him.

"I am so happy I must kiss someone," she said, "and after all you are the right person, for it is owing to you that I am happy."

"Well! well!" he said laughing, "I am delighted; and also relieved that you did not take it into your head to do that down at the office. I've just dropped in to ask after your health and to say good-bye. How do you stand it?"

"Oh, I am well. I never felt so well. I get tired, but I sleep it off. I made twenty-five dollars last week, and I celebrated the occasion by coming home in a cab. Oh, I can tell you I feel all made over, and Peele Manor seems prehistoric."

"You always did live at a galloping rate mentally. You are doing first rate—not but what you'll do better a year from now. There's pulse in your stuff. Keep your enthusiasm as long as you can. Nothing takes its place. Here's something for you."

A messenger-boy had entered with a note.

"For me?"

"For Mrs. Beverly Peele."

"Oh, dear!" she exclaimed, "it has come. This is from Mr. Peele. Do let me read it—I can't wait."

She tore the envelope open and read hastily:—

DEAR PATIENCE,—On the night of the day of your departure from Peele Manor, my son came up to us in a distracted condition. He had also contracted the grippe. The combination of disorders produced delirium and serious illness. For that reason and others we have not endeavoured to communicate with you. In fact, I only ascertained yesterday that you were working for Mr. Field, who I consider has further betrayed my friendship in associating himself with you in your insubordination.

Of course you are at liberty to act as you choose. The laws of this country are wretchedly inadequate regarding the authority of the husband. But one thing I insist upon: that you call upon us and make a definite statement of what you purpose to do. If you have repented and wish to return to us, we will overlook this wretched mistake. If you intend definitely to leave your husband and to follow the disgraceful life of a reporter on a sensational newspaper, you owe it to us to come here in person and define your position. The family with which you have allied yourself, my dear young woman, is not one to be dismissed with a note of three lines.

I particularly request that you call at three o'clock this afternoon.

Yours truly

GARDINER PEELE.

Patience handed the note to Mr. Field, who read it with much interest.

"Go by all means," he said; "otherwise they will annoy you with petty persecutions, and Beverly will haunt the 'Day.' Keep up all your pluck, and remember that this is a free country, and that they can compel you to do nothing you do not wish to do. You are mistress of the situation, and can call upon me for proof that you are supporting yourself adequately."

"Oh, I don't want to go. I never want to look

at one of them again. I'd just managed to forget them all."

"But you must go. It would look cowardly if you didn't; and, when you come to think of it, you certainly do owe them some sort of explanation. Poor Peele! he must have actually suffered at being treated in such cavalier fashion."

"Oh, well, I'll go! I'll go! But I wish I'd never seen them."

"You don't look at all pretty with that face, and I shall run. By the way, I came to tell you that I start for Paris to-morrow to join my wife, who has been on the other side for some months. Otherwise she would have called before this. Steele will take care of you."

V.

WHEN Patience went up to her room she slammed the door, closed the window violently, then sat down and beat a tattoo on the floor with her heels. Her spirits were still high, but cyclonic. She would willingly have smashed things, and felt no disposition to sing.

Nevertheless she rang the bell of the house in Eleventh Street at three o'clock. The butler bowed solemnly, and announced that the family awaited her

in the library. Patience, piqued that they were assured of her coming, was half inclined to turn back, then shrugged her shoulders, walked down the hall, and through the dining-room to the library in the annex.

The afternoon sun irradiated the cheerful room, but Beverly, with sunken eyes and pallid face, sat huddled by the fire. He sprang to his feet as Patience entered, then turned away with a scowl and sank back in his chair. His mother sat opposite. She merely bent her head to Patience, then turned her solicitous eyes to her son's face. Honora came forward and kissed her sweetly. Mr. Peele did not shake hands with her, but offered her a chair by the long table. Patience took it, and experienced a desire to laugh immoderately. They had the air of a Court of Inquiry, and appeared to regard her as a delinquent at the bar.

Mr. Peele sat in his revolving chair, tipped a little back. He had crossed his legs and leaned his elbows on the arms of the chair, pressing his finger-tips lightly together.

"Now," he said coldly, "we are ready to hear you."

"I have nothing in particular to say. I gave you fair warning, and you refused to listen, or to let me go abroad and so avoid publicity. I therefore took the matter in my own hands and went."

"You ignore your duty to your husband; your marriage vows?"

"There is only one law for a woman to acknowledge, and that is her self respect."

"The husband that loves you is entitled to no consideration?"

"Not when he exercises none himself. I refuse to admit that any human being has the right to control me unless I voluntarily submit myself to that control."

"Are you aware that you are uttering the principles of anarchy?"

"Well, the true anarchists of this world are not the bomb-throwers. When a man and woman are properly married there is no question of authority or disobedience; but a woman is a common harlot who lives with a man that makes her curse the whole scheme of creation."

Honora lifted a screen and hid her face. Beverly muttered inaudible remarks. Mrs. Peele lifted her eyebrows and curled her mouth. Mr. Peele moved his head slowly back and forth.

"I shall not attempt to contradict any of your remarkable theories," he said. "It is apparent that you are imbued with all the pernicious thought of the time. I am thankful that it is not my destiny to live among the next generation of women. Will you kindly tell me how you should have acted in this matter if you had had children?"

"Oh, I don't know! I have thought of that. No woman should have a child until she has been married

three years. By that time she would know whether or not she had made a mistake."

"And what shall you do if you are unable to support yourself?"

"Starve. No one has a right to live that the world has no use for, that can give the world nothing. Man's chief end is not bread and butter. If I can give the world anything it will be glad to give me a living in return. If I am a failure I'll walk out of existence as quietly as I altered my life. But I haven't the slightest doubt of my ability to take care of myself."

Mr. Peele pressed his lips together. The old man and the young woman regarded each other steadily, the one with malevolence in his eye, the other with defiance in hers. In that moment Mr. Peele hated her, and she knew it. She had made him feel old and a component part of the decaying order of things, while she represented the insolent confidence of youth in the future.

"Women make too much fuss," continued Patience. "If they don't like their life why don't they alter it quietly, without taking it to the lecture platform or the polemical novel? If they don't like the way man governs why don't they educate their sons differently? They can do anything with the plastic mind. I am sure it could be proved that most corrupt politicians and bad husbands had weak or careless mothers. If the men of a country are bad you can be sure the women are worse—"

Beverly sprang to his feet, overturning his chair. "Damn it!" he cried. "You can talk all you like, but you are mine and I'll have you."

Patience turned and fixed her angry eyes on his face. "Oh, no, you will not. Your father will tell you that I am quite free."

Mr. Peele gave a short, dry laugh. "She has the best of it," he said. "You cannot compel her to return to you, and she has the air of one who has tasted of the independence of making money—"

"Then I'll dog her steps. I'll make life hell for her—"

"You will do nothing of the sort, sir. Much as I disapprove of this young woman's course, she has in me an unwilling abettor. I shall not have my domestic affairs made food for the newspapers and their hordes of vulgar readers. Field would take up her cause and hound me to my grave. You will keep quiet, and in the course of time get a divorce of which no one will be the wiser until you marry again. If the gossip does not get into the papers it will not rise above a murmur. If you add to my annoyance I shall turn you out of Peele Manor and cut you off without a cent. You will not pretend that you can support yourself."

Patience rose. "If you have nothing more to ask I shall go," she said. "Beverly can bring his suit as soon as he chooses. It will go by default."

Beverly flung off his mother's restraining arm and rushed forward. "You shall not go!" he cried.

"Don't touch me!" cried Patience; but before she could reach the door Beverly had caught her in his arms. Excitement gave him strength. He held her with hard muscles and kissed her many times.

The ugly temper she had kept under control broke loose. She lifted her hand and struck him violently on the mouth. Her face too was convulsed, but with another passion. She felt as if the past month had been annihilated.

"Will you let me go?" she gasped. "Oh, how I hate you!" Then as he kissed her again, "I could kill you! I could kill you!" She flung herself free, and shaking with passion faced the scandalised family.

"You had better keep him out of the way," she said. "Do you know that once I nearly killed my own mother?"

VI.

PATIENCE slept little that night. Her head ached violently. When she presented herself at the office Steele sent her to report a morning lecture. It was dull, and she fell asleep. When she returned to the office Steele happened to be alone.

"I have no report," she said. "I fell asleep. That is all I have to say."

For a few seconds he stared at her, then turned on

his heel. In a moment he came back. "The next time you do that," he said, "hunt up the reporter of some other newspaper and get points from him. First-class reporters always stand in together. Here's a good story badly written that has come up from Honduras. Take it home and revamp it, and let me have it to-morrow."

"You are awfully good. I thought you would tell me to go, and I certainly deserve to."

"You certainly do, but we won't discuss the matter further."

That was an unhappy week for Patience, and she lost faith in her star. A great foreign actress, whom she was sent to interview, haughtily refused to be seen, and the next morning capriciously sent for a reporter of the "Eye," the hated rival of the "Day." She was put on the trail of a fashionable scandal and failed to gather any facts. She was sent to interview a strange old woman, supposed to have a history, who lived on a canal boat, and became so interested in the creature that she forgot all about the "Day," and did not appear at Mr. Steele's desk for three days. When she did he looked sternly at her guilty face, although the corners of his mouth twitched.

"I'm delighted to see you have not forsaken us," he said sarcastically. "May I ask if the canal boat woman quite slipped your memory?"

"N-o-o. I have been there ever since."

"Indeed?" His ears visibly twitched. "That alters the case. Did you get the story out of her?"

Patience looked at him steadily for a moment, then dropped her eyes.

"There is nothing to tell," she answered.

Steele sprang to his feet.

"Come out here," he said. He led her into a corner of the composing-room, and they sat down on a bench.

"Now tell me," he said peremptorily. "What have you heard? You have news in your eye. I see it."

"I have nothing to tell."

"Suppose you tell the truth. You have the story, and you won't give it up. Why not?"

"Well—you see—she confided in me—she said I was the only woman who had given her a decent word in twenty years; and if I told the story she would be in jail to-morrow night. Do you think I'd be so low as to tell it?"

"Sentimentality, my dear young woman, is fatal to a newspaper reporter. Suppose the entire staff should go silly; where would the 'Day' be?"

"It might possibly be a good deal more admirable than it is now."

"We won't go into a discussion of theory *v.* practice. I want that story."

"You won't get it."

"Indeed." He looked at her with cold, angry eyes.

"The trouble is that you have not been made to feel what the discipline of a newspaper office is—"

Patience leaned forward and smiled up audaciously into his face. "You would do exactly the same thing yourself," she said; "so don't scold any more. I admit that you frighten me half to death, but all the same I know that you would never send a poor old woman to prison—not to be made editor-in-chief."

He reddened, and looked anything but pleased at the compliment. "Do you know that you have just said that I am a jay newspaper man?" he asked.

But Patience only continued to smile, and in a moment he smiled back at her, then, with an impatient exclamation, left her and returned to his desk.

VII.

Two months later Steele asked her to come to the office at six o'clock, an hour at which the evening room was empty, and suggested that she should give up reporting, and start a column of paragraphs.

"I should like it better, of course," said Patience, after he had fully explained the requirements of the new department. "I was going to tell you that I *would not* go to that Morgue again."

"Oh, you wouldn't? Well, you stood it rather longer than I thought you would."

"And I'm tired of interviewing insolent, conceited people. Oh, by the way, I should thank you for all these nice things you've just said to me."

He dropped his businesslike manner suddenly. "How do you stand it?" he asked. Then in reply to her look of surprise: "Oh, you know, the Chief, when he went away, told me to look out for you."

Patience immediately became the charming woman accustomed to the homage of man. Steele's pre-eminence was gone from that moment.

"I am remarkably well, thank-you, considering how you have bullied me—and I can tell you that I did not fancy at all being ordered about by such an infant."

"Oh! Thanks! But when a man's too polite he doesn't get anything done for him—not in this business. And is it a crime to be an editor before you are thirty?"

"Oh, you have reason to be proud of yourself."

"You mean that I have the big head. Well, that is the disease of the age, you know. It would never do for a newspaper man to get a reputation for eccentricity. You'll have it yourself inside of six months if these paragraphs are a success."

"Never! I scorn to be so unoriginal."

"Well, we'll encourage your sentiments, and keep you as the office curio; but I didn't really bully you, did I?"

"Oh, I'll admit that you were kinder than I deserved,

once in a while: when I fell asleep at the lecture, for instance."

He laughed heartily. "That was the richest joke. There was absolutely nothing to say to you. If you only stood at the end of a long perspective of this business and could fully appreciate the humour of that situation! An experienced reporter, if he couldn't have lied out of it, or borrowed news, would never have shown up. You looked like a naughty child expecting to have its ears boxed."

"Oh, yes, Miss Merrien guyed me for a whole week; I know all about that now. And now that you've come down off your pedestal I'll thank you for all your patience and good training. If I've learned to write I owe it to your blue pencil; and I don't need to be told by Miss Merrien that you've saved me from a great deal of hard work."

He smiled charmingly. There were times when he looked like an old man with the mask of youth; to-day he looked a mere boy. "Oh, anyone would do as much for you, even if the Chief hadn't given orders. You are an unusual woman, you know. You proved that—but, of course, I have no right to speak to you of that." He stood up suddenly and held out his hand. "Well, be good to yourself," he said. "If you feel yourself breaking, take a rest."

"I wonder," she thought, as she went downstairs, "if that young man knows he betrayed the fact that he has been thinking a good deal about me? He certainly

is an interesting youth, and I should like to know him better."

Patience did not find her paragraphs as easy as she expected. It was one thing to work on a given idea, and another to supply idea and execution both; but after a time her sharpened brain grew more magnetic and life fuller of ideas than of lay figures. The men in the office frequently gave her tips, and one clever young reporter, who worshipped her from afar, fell into the daily habit of presenting her with a slip of suggestions.

Her choicest paragraphs were usually edited by Steele's ruthless hand, and now and again she was moved to wrath. Upon such occasions Mr. Steele merely smiled, and she was forced to smile in return or retire with the sulks.

VIII.

PATIENCE was writing busily in her little bedroom. The March winds were howling down the street. Her door opened, and a very elegant young woman entered.

"Hal!" cried Patience.

"You dear, bad girl!"

They kissed a half-dozen times, then sat down and looked at each other. Hal had quite the young married woman air, and held herself with a mien of con-

scious importance, entirely removed from conceit: she was *grande dame,* and the late object of attentions from smart folks abroad.

"Well, how are you?" asked Patience. "Oh, but I am glad to see you. Tell me all about yourself. When did you get back?"

"Day before yesterday. I've returned with thirty-two trunks, the loveliest jewels you ever saw, and quite a slave of a husband. I must say I never thought Latimer would keep up such a prolonged bluff, but he fills the *rôle* as if he'd been husbanding all his life. Oh, no. Don't look at me like that. I've forgotten it, and I've no regrets. *Mon Dieu!* To think that I might be in Boston on four hundred a month! I shall be a leader, my dear. You can do as much with a hundred and fifty thousand a year as you can with a million, for you can only spend just so much money anyhow. All that the big millionaires get out of their wealth is notoriety. Nobody 'd remember about them if it wasn't for the newspapers. But you bad, bad girl! What have you been and gone and done? Why didn't you wait for me? I would have rescued you."

"Oh, you couldn't, Hal dear. I didn't want to be rescued for a day or a month. I've run away for good and all."

"But, Patience, what an alternative! Do you mean to say you live in this cubby-hole?"

"I'm mighty happy in this cubby-hole, I can tell you; happier than I ever was at Peele Manor."

"That certainly was the mistake of my life. However, you've solved the problem more promptly than most women do. The celerity with which you untied that knot when you set about it moved me to admiration. By the way, do you know that Bev is ill?"

"Is he? What is the matter?"

"I don't know exactly,—one of those organic afflictions that men are always getting. How uninteresting men are when their interior decorations get out of gear. And they always will talk about them. Latimer is ever groaning with his liver; but no wonder. I've had to eat so much rich stuff to keep him from feeling lonesome that I've actually grown fat. Well, we don't know what is the matter with Bev, yet. The doctor says it's a result of the influenza. He has some pain, and makes an awful fuss, like all men."

"Where are you going to stay, now?"

"I am at the Holland, but will spend the summer at the Manor and the fall at Newport. Our house on the Avenue—opposite the park, you know—will be finished by winter. That house will be a jewel. I got the most beautiful things abroad for it. Then you will come and live with me."

Patience shook her head.

"It wouldn't do, and you will see it. I belong to another sphere now; but I can see you sometimes."

"Well, put up that stuff, and come to the Holland and dine with me. You can finish up to-night. I have

yards and yards to talk to you about. I'll never give you up,—remember that."

IX.

WHEN the hot days and nights of summer came Patience did not find routine and the hunt as fascinating sport as when the electric thrill of cooler seasons was in the air. Her paragraphs acquired some reputation, and her mind grew tense in the effort to keep them up to a high standard, and to prepare at least one surprise a day. She grew thin and nervous, and began to wonder what life and herself would be like five years hence. Mr. Field and Steele helped her as much as they dared, and she managed to make about fifty dollars a week: her success gave Mr. Field the excuse to pay her special rates. It never occurred to her to give up, and she assured Hal that she would have nervous prostration four times a year before she would return to Peele Manor.

There were times when she passionately longed for the isolation of a mountain top. Nature had been part of her very individuality for all the years of her life until this last, and a forested mountain top alone was the antithesis of Park Row. She sometimes had a whimsical idea that her grey matter was becoming slowly modelled into a semblance of that famous pre-

cinct. She loved it loyally; but the isolation of high altitudes sent their magnetism to another side of her nature. She was getting farther and farther away from herself in the jealous absorption of her work,—the skurrying practical details of her life. She felt that she could no longer forecast what she should do under given circumstances, that something in her was slowly changing. What the result would be she could not predict; and she craved solitude and the opportunity to study herself out.

In August Mrs. Field took her to her house in the Berkshire hills. Although she had no solitude there, she returned much refreshed, and did good work all winter. Steele she never saw outside of the office, but he managed to treat her with a certain knightliness, and she lay awake, occasionally, thinking about him. Hard work and the practical side of life had disposed of a good deal of her romance, but she was still given to vagaries. Steele's modernity fascinated her. No other epoch but this extraordinary last quarter of the nineteenth century could have produced him.

She was a great favourite in the office. Again a thaw had succeeded a second glacier period, induced by entire change of environment, and she liked nearly everybody she knew, and became a most genial and expansive young woman. She often laughed at herself, and concluded that she would never strike the proper balance until she fell in love (if she ever did), when the large and restless currents of her nature would unite

and find their proper destination. She had no "weird experiences." Her abounding feminity appealed to the chivalry of the gentlemen among whom she was thrown, and she was clever enough not to flirt with them, to treat them impartially as good comrades. The second-class men detested her, and were not conciliated: the underbred newspaper man touches a lower notch of vulgarity than any person of similar social degree the world over.

One morning she awoke about four o'clock,—that is, her mind awoke; her body was still too full of sleep to move to the right or left. It was one of her favourite sensations, and she lay for a time meditating upon the various pleasures, great and small, which are part of man's inheritance.

Suddenly she became conscious that it was raining. She had moved into a back room on the second floor. Beside one window was a tin roof upon which the rain poured with heavy reiterance. In the back yard was a large ailanthus tree which lifted itself past her windows to the floor above. A light wind rustled it. The rain pattered monotonously upon its wide leaves, producing a certain sweet volume of sound.

It was long since she had listened to rain in the night. It was associated in her mind with the vague sweet dreams of girlhood and with her life in Carmel Valley. She had loved to wander through the pine-woods when the winter rains were beating through the

uplifted arms, swirling and splashing in the dark fragrant depths. It said something to her then, she hardly knew what, nor when it roared upon the roof of the old farm-house, or flung itself through the windows of Carmel tower, as she and Solomon huddled close to the wall.

But when it had beaten upon the roof of her little room in Miss Tremont's house it had sung the loneliness of youth into her soul, murmured of the great joy to which every woman looks forward as her birthright. Hard worked and absorbed as she may have been during the day, if the rain awoke her in the night, it was to dreams of love and of nothing else, and of the time when she should no longer be alone.

This morning she listened to the rain for a time, then moved suddenly to her side, her eyes opening more widely in the dark. The rain said nothing to her. She listened to it without a thrill, with no longing, with no loneliness of soul, and no vague tremor of passion.

Nothing in her unhappy experience had so forcibly brought home to her the changes which her inner self had undergone in the last few years. Life was a hard clear-cut fact; she could no longer dream. Imagination had taken itself out of her and gone elsewhere, into some brain whose dear privilege it was to have a long future and a brief past.

The tears scalded her eyes. She cursed Beverly Peele. She wished she had remained in Monterey. There, at least, she would never have married anyone, for there was no one to marry.

"Even if my life had been a success," she thought, "if Beverly Peele had been less objectionable, or had died, and I had had the world at my feet, it would be too high a price to pay. Not even to care that one is alone when the rain is sweeping about with that hollow song! To think and dream of nothing beyond the moment! To have accepted life with cynical philosophy, and feel no desire to shake the Universe with a great passion! To be beyond the spell of the rain is to be a thousand years old, and a thousand centuries away from the cosmic sense. I wish I were dead."

And there were other moods. Sometimes the devil which is an integral part of all strong natures—of woman's as well as of man's, and no matter what her creed—awoke and clamoured. There were four or five men in the office whom she liked well enough when absent, and in whom the lightning of her glance would have changed friendship to passion. Why she resisted the temptation which so fiercely assailed her at times she never knew. Conventions did not exist for her impatient mind excepting in so far as they made life more comfortable; she had in full measure youth's power to know and to give joy, and she owed no one loyalty. And at this time she imaged no future: she had lost faith in ideals. It was only at brief intervals that there came a sudden passionate desire—almost a flash of prophetic insight—for the one man who must exist for her among the millions of men. And this, if anything, took the place of her lost ideals

and conquered the primal impulses of her nature. Or was it a mere matter of destiny? Woman is a strange and complex instrument. She is as she was made, and it is not well to condemn her even after elaborate analysis.

X.

ONE morning in May, Hal came in before Patience was out of bed. She sat down on a chair and tapped the floor with her foot.

"I come charged with a message, a special mission, as it were," she said. "I hardly know where to begin."

"Well?"

"Don't look at me like that, or I'll never have the courage to go on. Bev is desperately ill,—not in bed, but he has the most frightful pains: his disease, which has been threatening for a year, has developed. It may or may not be fatal. The doctor says it certainly will be unless he has peace of mind, and he is fretting after you like a big baby. The grippe seems to have broken the back of his temper, and he is simply a great calf bleating for its parent. It would be ridiculous if it were not serious. You'd better come back to us, Patience."

"I won't."

"I knew you would say exactly that; but when you

think it over you will come. Remember that the doctor practically says that you can either save or prolong his life. Mamma is simply distracted. You know she adores Bev, and she broke down completely last night and told me to come and beg you to return. You know what that means: you'll have nothing to fear from her."

"Oh, I can't go back! I can't! I think I should die if I went back."

"We don't die so easily, my dear. Now, I'll go and let you think it over," and the diplomate kissed Patience and retired.

Patience endeavoured to put the matter out of her mind, but it harassed her through her day's duties, and her work was bad. Steele told her as much the next afternoon when she came into the office late, intending to write there instead of at home. Her room was haunted by Beverly's pallid face and sunken eyes.

"Oh, well," she said, flinging herself down before a table, "perhaps it's the last, so it doesn't matter."

"Why? What do you mean? You do look pale. Are you ill?"

Patience hesitated a moment, then told him of the complication. He listened, without comment, looking down upon the skurrying throngs.

"I suppose I must go," she said in conclusion. "Anyway I feel that I shall go, whether I want to or not."

He came over to the table and regarded her with his preternatural seriousness.

"Yes," he said, "you will go. It will be like you."

"Oh, I am no angel. It's not that—please! It's —don't you know there are some good acts you can't help? Not only do traditions and conventions drive you into them, but your own selfishness—I haven't the courage to be lashed by my conscience. If I could give that morphine, do you think I'd go?"

He smiled. "Do you analyse everything like that? However, I choose to keep to my illusions. I think that you have magnificent theories, but act very much like other people. Can I go up and see you sometimes? I may have a chance to know you, now."

She put up her hand and took his impulsively. "Yes, come," she said. "That is the only thing that will make life supportable."

XI.

SHE went home and wrote the following letter to Beverly Peele:—

"I will return to Peele Manor and remain while you are seriously ill, under the following conditions: (1) That you pay me what you would be obliged to pay a trained nurse; (2) That you will treat me on that basis absolutely. My feeling toward you has undergone no change. I am not your wife. But as your physician

holds me responsible for your life, I will be your nurse on the terms stated above."

The next day she received this telegram:—

Come. Terms agreed to.

BEVERLY PEELE.

She was received by the various members of the household with infinite tact. Mrs. Peele's cold blue eyes sheltered an angry spark, but she behaved to her errant daughter-in-law exactly as if matrimonial vacations were orthodox and inevitable. Honora kissed her sweetly, and asked her if the roses were not beautiful. When Mr. Peele came home he said, "Ah, good-evening." Beverly, who had evidently been coached, did not offer to kiss her, but immediately explained every detail of his disease. Hal and her husband were in the North Carolina mountains.

Beverly was not a good actor, and his eyes followed his wife with kaleidoscopic expression. She frequently encountered hungry admiration and angry resentment; and if he had made up his mind to abide by her decree he as clearly evidenced that he considered her his salaried property: he demanded her constant attendance. He looked so wan and hopeless that Patience was moved to pity, and even to tenderness, and devoted herself to his care.

For the first two weeks she felt hourly as if she must pack her trunk and flit back to the "Day." She longed for a very glimpse of the grimy men in the composing-

room, and felt that the sight of Morgan Steele in his shirt-sleeves would give more spiritual satisfaction than the green and grey of the Palisades.

The life at Peele Manor seemed doubly flat after her emancipation. At the breakfast table, Mrs. Peele and Honora discussed their small interests. At luncheon, Beverly—who arose late—gave the details of his night. At dinner there was little conversation of any sort. The mornings, and the afternoons from four to six —when Beverly drove with his mother and Honora —were Patience's own. Although discontented, she was by no means unhappy: she was out of bondage forever. If Beverly grew better she could return to the "Day" after a reasonable time had elapsed.

She spent most of her leisure rambling over the hills in idle reverie or meditating upon her checkered life. She gave a good deal of thought to the many phases of life which had flashed before her startled eyes in the last year, but was too young not to be more interested in herself than in problems, however momentous. Still, she did not feel much more intimate with herself than she had felt in Park Row.

She frequently wondered with some pique and much disapproval that she heard nothing from Morgan Steele. The few glimpses she had caught of the nature behind the mask tempted her to idealise him, and she finally succumbed. One night she awoke to the fact that she had been walking the stars with him, discussing the mysteries of the Universe. She pictured the smile with

which he would regard the workings of her imagination, were they revealed to him, and recalled his business-like demeanour, his shirt-sleeves, his Park Row vocabulary, and his impatient scorn of "damned slush."

It happened to be midnight when these later thoughts arrived, and she laughed aloud.

"What are you laughing at?" demanded a querulous voice from the next room.

"Nothing."

"Nothing? Do you suppose I'm an idiot? Tell me what you were laughing at."

"Go to sleep, go to sleep."

"I can't go to sleep. You lie there and laugh while I lie here and suffer."

"Why didn't you say you were suffering? Do you want the morphine?"

"No, I don't."

An hour later Patience was roused from her first heavy sleep.

"Patience! Patience! Oh, my God! My God! My God!"

Patience stumbled out of bed and into her dressing-gown and slippers, shaking her head vigorously to dispel the vapours in her brain.

"Yes, yes!" she said. "I'm coming. Do please don't make such a fuss. You'll wake up everybody—"

"Not make a fuss! Oh, I wish you had it for a minute—"

Patience ran into the lavatory and turned up the

gas. The night was very warm, and the door leading into Honora's room stood wide. The light fell full on her face. Patience saw that her eyes were open.

"I hope Beverly didn't wake you up," she said. "He does make such a noise."

"I was awake. I never sleep well in warm weather. I don't envy you, though."

"Oh, I don't mind if only I don't make a terrible mistake some night and give him an overdose. He takes particular pains to wait until I am in my first sleep and then I hardly know what I am doing. There! this is the third time I have dropped the wretched stuff. What is the good of drop bottles, anyway?"

"Why don't you use the hypodermic?"

"I can't. It would make me ill to puncture people. And this does him as much good." She set the bottle down impatiently, drew a basin full of cold water, dashed it over her face, then dropped the dose and took it to Beverly.

"Stay with me," he commanded. "You know it doesn't take effect at once, and I feel better if I hold your hand." She sat down beside him and nodded sleepily until the morphine did its work.

XII.

THE next afternoon, a few moments after Beverly had gone for his drive, Morgan Steele's card was brought up to Patience. She had imagined that this first call would induce a mild thrill of nerve, but she merely remarked to the butler: "Tell him I will be down in a moment," walked to the long mirror in the corner, and shook out her violet and white organdie skirts. Her long hair was braided and tied with a lavender ribbon.

"I look very well," she thought, and went downstairs.

Steele awaited her in the drawing-room, and, as she entered, was standing with his head thrown back, regarding the medallion of Whyte Peele. She noted anew how well he dressed and carried his clothes. He looked quite at home in the drawing-room of Peele Manor. Her first remark followed in natural sequence,—

"How odd not to see you in your shirt-sleeves."

He turned with a start and a sudden warmth in his face.

"Oh, well, I hope you'll never see me that way again. How charming you look in that frock and with your hair in that braid! *I* always imagine *you* in prim

tailor things, with your hair tucked out of sight under a stiff turban. This is lovely. You look like a little girl. Those awful dress reformers should see you."

"It's a comfort to think that the She-males cannot exterminate the artistic sense. Let us go into the library."

"Is there a large, comfortable chair there? These are impressive but unpleasant. Perhaps you would not suspect it, but I love a comfortable chair and a cigar better than anything in life."

"One thing I do suspect—that we shall have to become acquainted all over again. You are not exactly like a fallen angel outside of the office, but you certainly have not patronised me for five minutes."

"Oh, you can take your revenge now and patronise me. Hang the shop! I don't want to think about it."

In the library he critically inspected every chair, selected one that pleased him, and drawing it to the open window sank into it with a deep sigh of content. Patience gave him permission to smoke, and a moment later he looked so happy that she laughed aloud.

"You may laugh," he said plaintively, "but you have less imagination than I thought if you don't understand what this is to a man after Park Row. After an hour of that water and your muslin frock, I shall go back as refreshed as if my brain had taken a cold bath."

"I'd fly back to the office this minute if I could.

I've felt like a bottle of over-charged champagne for two weeks."

"You have the enthusiasm of youth. When you are my age—sixty-five—you will be thankful for the *dolce far niente* of a colonial manor. This sort of life suits you—you are a born *châtelaine.* You have lost your tired expression, and are actually stouter. Besides, I want to come up here to see you."

"Will you come often?"

"As often as you will let me. I am free every afternoon, you know, and if I followed my tactless inclination I'd come seven times a week. However, don't look alarmed; I'm only coming once a week—" He sat up suddenly, his eyes sparkling. "By Jove!" he exclaimed. "What a beauty!"

Patience followed his eyes, which were directed ardently upon a sail-boat skimming up the river.

"Are you fond of sailing?" she asked.

"Am I? I could live in a boat. I'd rather be in a boat than—than even talking to you."

"Well, you shall be inside of a boat in five minutes," she said good-naturedly. "Wait until I get my hat and gloves!"

"Being only the nurse," she said, as they walked down the wooded slope to the boat-house, "I don't know that I have any right to take liberties, but I will, all the same. I feel that it is an act of charity."

"It certainly is, and you really are an angel.—She's

a good boat," he said approvingly, a few moments later, as he unreefed the sail.

Patience arranged the cushions and made herself comfortable, and they shot up the river in a stiff breeze. She watched Steele curiously. He looked as happy as a schoolboy. His hat was on the back of his head, his eyes shone. Once as he threw back his head and laughed, he bore an extraordinary resemblance to the Laughing Faun.

"I've lived in a boat for a whole summer," he said, "and never seen a woman nor wanted to, nor a man neither, for that matter. There are three months in the year when I want nothing better in life than this." His large cool eyes moved slowly to hers. "Still," he added, "I do believe it's an improvement to have you here. What fun if we had a little yacht and could sail like this all summer! I think we'd hit it off, don't you? We shouldn't either of us talk too much."

Patience laughed. It was impossible to coquet with Steele. He took no notice of it. "I should be afraid you'd tip me over if you got tired of me."

"I shouldn't get tired of you," he said seriously. "I never met a woman I liked half as much. You're lovely to look at, and your mind is so interesting to study. Guess I'd better come about."

They sailed for two hours. The wind fell, and they talked in a desultory fashion. They discovered that they had the same literary gods, and occasionally Steele waxed enthusiastic. He had read more than most men

of forty; nor was there anything youthful about the fixity of his opinions.

"Oh, dear!" said Patience, suddenly, "why did we never meet before? I like you better than anyone I ever knew. I've been hunting all my life for a mental companion."

"So have I," he said, smiling at her in his half cynical way, "and now I've found you I don't propose to let you go; not even next winter."

He confided to her that he had written a good deal, although he had published nothing. Patience wondered where he had found time to accomplish so much.

"I'm going to bring up some of my stuff and read it to you," he said. "You can take that as a compliment if you like, for I've only shown it to one other person—a man."

"Now, I know why you like me! You are going to study me."

"Well, it's partly that," he replied coolly. "You are a new type—to me at anyrate, and I shall probably know a good deal more after I have known you a year or so than I do now. Who is that? What an amiable-looking person!"

Patience followed his glance. Beverly stood at the foot of the slope, with distorted face.

"Oh, dear," she said, "that is Mr. Peele. I am afraid he is going to be disagreeable. Of course I am not obliged to stay—but in a way I am."

Steele ran the boat into the dock, handed her out, and reefed the sail before he spoke. Then he turned and looked at her squarely.

"Would you rather I did not come?" he asked.

"No! No! I want you to come. I'll think it over and write you—or—I wonder if you are horrid like most men and would misunderstand me if I asked you always to come on a certain day and meet me in that wood up there, instead of going to the house?"

"Look here," he said in his old businesslike tone, "just let me set your mind at rest. I haven't the slightest intention of making love to you. In the first place I am just now tired and sick of that sort of thing—a state a man does get into occasionally, although a woman will never believe it. In the second place I like to think of you as *sui generis;* a woman on a pedestal. It is very refreshing. A week from to-day I'll be in that wood, and I'll stay there from four to six whether you come or not. There comes my train."

"You must flag it. Hurry. I'll expect you Thursday."

XIII.

"WHO is that man?" thundered Beverly, as she crossed the track behind the train.

Patience raised her eyebrows. "What have you to do with my visitors?"

"You sha'n't receive men, and you sha'n't sail in my boat."

"Of course the boat is yours. I shall not use it again."

"You are my nurse."

"Your nurse is always ready to be dismissed," and she walked up the slope, taking no further notice of him.

Hal returned the following week; and, as Beverly improved steadily, the house was filled with company once more. Whenever Patience hinted that she was no longer required, Beverly immediately went to bed and rent the air; but as a matter of fact his attacks were growing less and less frequent.

Patience, in the circumstances, was not impatient to return to work until the hot weather was over. Her position was very pleasant, Hal was ever her loyal friend, and she saw Morgan Steele once a week.

The wood was a wild place on a slope of the bluff some distance above the house. Its underbrush made

it unpopular with the guests of Peele Manor. Steele left the train at the regular station a mile up the road and walked back without encounter. In the heart of the dark, cool little wood Patience swung two hammocks and filled them with pillows. Steele lay full length in his and looked comfortable and happy, a cigar ever between his lips. Patience, in hers, sat in as dignified an attitude as she could assume.

"Does it make you feel romantic?" he said one day, looking at her quizzically.

"What do you mean?" she asked, flushing a little.

"Oh, I think you have a queer, romantic, sentimental streak through your modernity—or had. I've been wondering if there was any of it left."

"I never told you."

"No, but you suggest it. Tell me: didn't you once have ideals and that sort of thing?"

"I don't see how you can even guess it, for I have none now."

"Oh, yes, you have. You won't when you're thirty, but you have all sorts of kiddish notions stored away yet in that brain of yours." He had seen Peele a few days before in the train, and knew the history of their courtship quite as well as if she had related it to him, but he was curious to know what she had been before. He drew her on until she told him the story of the tower and the owl.

That little picture pleased his artistic sense, but

when she described her girlish ideals and dreams he threw back his head and laughed loud and long.

"What would I have done with you if I had met you then?" he said, looking with intense amusement at her half angry face. "I should have run, I expect. You are a thousand times more interesting now."

"Not to myself."

"Of course not, because you are less of an egoist, and draw a larger measure of your individuality from your environment. But you are real now, where before you were unreal—you were a sort of waxwork with numerous dents. The two extremes in this world are nature and civilisation. Children belong by right to nature, and she holds on to them as long as possible. When civilisation gets hold of them she proceeds to pick out with a pair of tweezers all but the primal passions; and the result is the only human variety capable of enjoying life."

"Don't you believe in ideals?" asked Patience, rather wistfully.

"Of course not," he said contemptuously. "Life is what it is, and you can't alter it. And as we are only just so big and have only just so many years in which to get over a limited surface of this mighty complication called Life, all we can do is to keep our eyes open, and pick out here and there what appeals to our taste most strongly, swallowing the disagreeable majority as philosophically as possible. When you know the world —and yourself—you can't have ideals, and the sooner

you quit wasting time thinking about them the sooner you begin to enjoy life. And remember that we live but from day to day—we may be a cold cadaver to-morrow. Life is a game of chance. To set up ideals is as purposeless as to waste this life preparing for an impossible next. Omar expressed it better than I can when he said:—

> " 'To-morrow? Why, to-morrow I myself may be
> With yesterday's seven thousand years.' "

"You have certain ideals though," said Patience. "You are intellectually ambitious; and you say that you never run after a merely pretty face, and never wasted time on any sort of woman unless she had brains; and the men at the office say that you are scrupulously square in money matters. So that I can't see that you are altogether without ideals."

"Those are mere matters of taste and worldly sense. I aim for nothing that is impossible. When I think I want a thing I set about to accomplish it. If I find that it is impossible I quit without further loss of time. You don't suppose I have an ideal woman, do you? How can any man that knows women?—although he may often succumb to a happy combination. When I was exactly twelve my Sunday School teacher forestalled any inclination I might have developed to idealise woman. I met her once after I was grown, by the way, and it did me good to tell her what I thought of her. That is where you women have the advantage

of us. It is so long before you know man at all that after you do it is hard work making him over as he is. The woman never lived that understood man by intuition. That is the reason a woman so seldom has any fascination but that of mere youth until she's pretty well on to thirty. You, of course, have had an exceptional experience, but you are a good deal of a kid yet."

XIV.

MORGAN STEELE was a type of the precocious young United States newspaper man which only this end of the century has evolved: Preternaturally wise in the way of the world and the nature of woman; with young blood and cold judgment; wary, deliberate, calculating; full of kind impulses; generous with his money, yet careful of it; ready to make cold-blooded use of a man to-day and offer him a free lodging to-morrow; possessed of more self-control than the Club man of forty; without sentimentality, yet with a certain limited power of loving; having a thorough appreciation of the finer as of the coarser shades of woman; incapable of a blind supreme rush of feeling, through the habit of eternal analysis; placidly and philosophically content with the present, and fully expecting to be laid away in the past at forty; *blasé,* yet full of boyish delight in outdoor sport;

having faith in no woman, yet treating the lowest with a cynical kindness and consideration which was part of his philosophy.

One night he faced the question of his relationship to Patience with his usual deliberation.

He lay on a divan in his bachelor quarters: a long room with bedroom and bath attached. The walls of the living-room were covered with red paper, the doors and windows hung with Smyrna cloth. A rug half covered the stained floor. Between the windows was a large desk covered with papers. A long table was strewn thick with magazines. Small bookcases were filled with the works of Omar, Whitman, Emerson, Hugo, Heine, Dumas, Maupassant, Bourget, Pater, Dobson, Herrick, Ibsen, Zola, Landor, Rabelais, Stevenson, Kipling. On the mantel there was a number of photographs and a notable absence of legs. The walls were covered with artists' sketches.

"The summer will pass harmlessly enough," he thought. "I only see her once a week, and her husband is likely to be hidden in the brush; but when she returns to town in the winter I shall find myself calling on her every night. I'm not stuck on matrimony, but I certainly should like her for a companion in a little house or double apartment where there would be plenty of elbow-room and some chance of keeping up the illusions. I think it would be some years before I should tire of her, and I think I could love her a good deal. Why in thunder doesn't the man die? She's

too good for anything else. It would be a terrible pity —the details smirch so. A novelist would remark at this point, 'And yet he never thought of sparing her.' No, my dear fictionist, we don't, nor if she loved me would she thank me for sparing her. And yet it would be a pity. She is like some delicate wild-flower that has been transplanted. I should like to offer her the best one can, instead of practically remarking: 'My dear, this brain racket is worked out for the present. We'll return to it later, or not at all.'

"It is often a clever thing for those that love and cannot marry to part when the shock comes: they coddle the misery and have a glorious time suffering. But that would not do for us. We live in the thick and rush of life, and have no time to sit down with memories, hardly time enough to realise an ache. We must have our day in fact or not at all; and afterward, thank God, there is again no time for memories. Well, this is only the eighth of July. By winter that intolerable nuisance may be in the family vault."

XV.

PEOPLE remarked that summer that Patience looked unusually well. At times her eyes had a certain liquid softness, at others they sparkled wickedly. Her colour was beautiful and her manner and conversation full of animation.

It was on a hot August afternoon that Patience and Steele, in the green shades of their wood, suddenly met each other's eyes and burst out laughing.

"We are in love," said Patience.

"Well—yes—I suppose we are."

"I feel very light-minded over this unexpected *dénouement.* I had imagined all sorts of dramatic climaxes; but the unexpected always will happen in this life—more's the pity."

"Did you expect we should not fall in love?"

"I did not think about it at all for a time—just drifted. But as the situation is so serious it is as well to take it humorously. What are we going to do about it?"

He had removed his cigar, and was regarding her with his contemplative stare. "I have thanked your complicated ancestors more than once for your large variety of moods. I am glad and sorry that you have spoken: sorry, because this was very pleasant; glad that

the discussion of ways and means should take place here instead of in town. I shall be brutally frank. How long is your husband likely to live?"

"He may live for twenty years. I heard the doctors —they have a consultation every once in awhile—tell Mrs. Peele so the other day. He is much better. On the other hand, he might take a turn for the worse any day."

"Then you must persuade him to give you a divorce."

"Oh, dear, I am afraid that is out of the question. I've thought of it; but—you don't know him."

"You are a clever woman: now look up your resources. Enlist the family on your side. Tell them that you are about to leave, never to return, and that you are on the road to become a famous newspaper woman; that if they will persuade your husband to give you a divorce you will drop their name; otherwise that it will be dinned in their ears for the next twenty years. Tell them that we intend to let you sign hereafter. That ought to fetch them, as they appear to look upon the newspaper business with shuddering horror. And persuade them that Beverly needs a good domestic little wife who would gladden his declining years."

"I'm sorry I feel in this mood," said Patience, abruptly. "I should far rather it had been the other way—the usual way. I suppose I am possessed with what Poe calls The Imp of the Perverse."

"My dear girl, I need not remind you that it is just

as well and a good deal better. You need a shaking to wake you up, though. You imagine that you are awake already, but you are not—not by a long sight. You have buried your nature five fathoms deep. Well, time is up. I must be off. Think over what I have said. Good-bye."

XVI.

On the following Thursday morning Patience walked slowly over to where Beverly sat under a tree on one of the lawns, reading a newspaper. She had made up her mind to adopt Steele's advice, but had deferred the evil moment as long as possible.

"Beverly," she said abruptly, sitting down in front of him, "I want to speak to you."

He laid down the newspaper and regarded her with eager admiration. She had carefully selected the most unbecoming frock she possessed, a sickly green, and twisted her hair in a fashion to distort the fine lines of her head. Nevertheless, she looked as fresh as the morning, and her eyes sparkled with excitement.

"What is it?" he asked. "Oh, why—why—"

"Never mind! I am going to have a business talk with you, and please don't get excited. If you do, you'll be sure to have a pain, you know."

"Well, what is it? It doesn't do a fellow any good to keep him in suspense."

"On the first of November I am going away—"

"You are not!"

"And I shall not come back—not in any circumstances. You have proved that your attacks are more or less under your own control. A sojourn at some foreign baths will probably cure you. I have given you all of my life that I intend to give you. I know that self-sacrifice is the ideal of happiness of some women, but it is not mine. When I leave here on the first of November it will be forever. There is no inducement, material nor sentimental, that will bring me back. Do you understand that much clearly?"

He burst into a volley of oaths, and beat his knees with his fists. Patience continued as soon as she could be heard:—

"Now, it can do you no possible good to retain a legal hold on me, nor can you care to hear of your name becoming familiar in Park Row. Give me my freedom, and I will take my own name—"

"You'll get no divorce," he roared, "now nor ever. Do you understand that? I'll brace up and live until I'm ninety—by God I will! I'll go abroad and live at a water cure. You'll never be the wife of any other man. Do you understand that?"

"Oh, Beverly," she said, breaking suddenly, "don't be cruel,—don't! What good can it do you? Give me my freedom."

He grasped her wrists. His eyes were full of rage and malevolence. "Do you want to marry someone else?" he asked. "Some damned newspaper man, I suppose."

Patience stood up and shook him off. "If ever I do marry another man," she said cuttingly, "you may be sure he will have brains this time, and that he will also be a gentleman. The most vulgar persons I have ever known have been socially the most highly placed."

As she moved away he sprang after her and caught her arm. "Now look here," he said hoarsely, "you'll neither marry, nor will you have a lover, unless you want all New York to know it. The moment you leave this place a detective goes after you. You'll do nothing that I don't know. I may not have brains, but I'll get the best of you all the same."

Patience flung him off and went straight to Mrs. Peele. Her mother-in-law watched her with narrowed eyes until she had finished, then remarked unexpectedly: "I shall do my best to make my son divorce you. If you intend to leave us I prefer that the rupture should be complete. As you suggest, I have no desire to see the name of Peele signed to newspaper articles. Moreover, I believe I can persuade my son to marry again,—a woman of his own station, who will not desecrate the name of wife; and who," with sudden violence, "will give this house an heir." She paused a moment to recover herself, then continued more calmly:

"I have talked the matter over with my husband, and he agrees with me. Of course, you will expect no alimony."

"I don't want alimony. I make more with my pen than Beverly ever allowed me."

The red came into Mrs. Peele's face. "My son was quite as generous as was to be expected. Moreover, he had the right to demand that his wife should not come to him empty-handed. I shall speak to Beverly."

An hour later Patience met Mrs. Peele in the side hall. The older woman looked flushed and excited. "I have had a most terrible interview with Beverly," she exclaimed. "I can do nothing with him. You little fool, why didn't you swear that you did not want to marry another man? Heaven knows I should prefer to have you take another name as soon as possible; but you have ruined your chances by letting Beverly suspect the truth."

Patience sank upon a chair, and sat for a long while staring straight before her. She felt the incarnation of rage and hate. Her lovely face was set and repellent. She came to herself with a start, and wondered if she had ever had any womanly impulses.

She had never wanted anything in her life as much as she wanted to marry Morgan Steele. His very unlikeness to all her old ideals fascinated her, and she was convinced that she was profoundly in love. She could hardly imagine what life with him would be like, and

was the more curious to ascertain; and the obstacles enraged her impatient spirit.

The butler left the dining-room to announce luncheon.

"Send mine up to my room," she said. As she reached the first landing of the stair she turned to him suddenly. "Tell John to go to New York this afternoon, and have Mr. Beverly's morphine bottle filled. He took the last last night and he may need it again before I go down myself. Don't fail to tell him. The bottle is in the lavatory."

That afternoon she met Steele at the edge of the wood.

"I could not keep still," she said. "My brain feels on fire."

He drew her hand through his arm and held it tenderly. "What is it?" he asked. "Did you speak, and was it disagreeable?"

"I'll tell you in a minute. Just now it is enough to feel you here."

"I can only stay an hour. I should not have come at all, but I could not stay away."

When they reached the hammocks Patience flung herself into hers and told the story of the morning with dramatic indignation. Then, insensibly, she drifted into the story of her married life, and described her intense hatred and loathing of her husband.

"It was all my own fault," she said in conclusion. "I married him with my eyes open; but all the same I hate him. Sometimes I felt, and feel yet, fairly mur-

derous. I seem to have a terrible nature—does it make you hate me?"

He laughed. "No, I don't hate you, and you know it quite as well as I do. You have wonderful possibilities—but I can't quite make up my mind that I am the man—"

"Oh, yes, you are. I could love you as much as I hate Beverly Peele."

"Well, if you think so it amounts to the same thing, for awhile at least. I shall come again in a few days. I'll write you. If your husband cannot be induced to change his mind I'll talk to you about a paper that has been offered to me in Texas; but if you prefer it the other way, I'll leave you alone without a word."

"Oh, I don't know! There are some words I hate, —the words free-love and adultery. I don't want to be exploited in the newspapers, and I don't want to be insulted by my landlord. After all, expediency is the source of all morality. My life with you would be a thousand times better than it was with Beverly Peele; but I suspect that we can't violate certain moral laws that heredity has made part of our brain fibre, without ultimate regret, even when we keep the world in ignorance. I suffered horribly once, although I had not defied the conventions. But I think we must have everything, or the large share of herself that Nature has given each of us rebels,—in other words, the ideal is not complete."

"When you are very much in love," he said dryly, "you won't analyse."

Contrary to her habit, she remained in the wood for some time after he left her. Suddenly she was aroused from her reverie by a peculiar, heavy sound, as of a man crawling. She listened intently, her hair stiffening: the house was a quarter of a mile away. The sound continued steadily. She sprang to her feet and fled from the wood. As she ran up the hill beyond, she glanced fearfully over her shoulder. A man shot from the lower edge of the wood and ran toward the stables.

XVII.

An hour after midnight Patience ran into Honora's room and shook her violently.

"Honora! Honora!" she cried, "something is the matter with Beverly. I can't wake him up."

Honora stretched herself languidly. Her eyelids fluttered a moment, then lifted. She said sleepily:

"What is it, Patience?"

"Beverly! Go to him—quick—while I wake up Mr. and Mrs. Peele, and send for the doctor. He dropped his own morphine to-night, and he must have taken too much."

A few moments later there was an alarmed group of

people at Beverly Peele's bedside, and the butler could be heard at the telephone demanding the doctor.

Mr. Peele was in his pyjamas, and Patience struggled with an importunate desire to tell him that his hair stood on end. Mrs. Peele's back hair was in a scant braid; the front locks were on pins. Her skin looked pallid and old. Honora, as usual, looked like a vision from heaven. Hal and her husband were in Newport, and there were no guests at Peele Manor.

"Are you sure," asked Mr. Peele, as precisely as if his hair was parted in the middle and plastered on each side, "that anything is the matter? Does not the morphine always put him to sleep?"

"Not at once. You see he takes it internally, and it's twenty minutes or half an hour before it takes effect. During that time he always groans, for he never takes it until the last minute. I heard him get up and return to bed; and then I knew something must be the matter because he was so quiet—"

"How could you let him drop it himself?" exclaimed Mrs. Peele, passionately. "How could you? What are you here for?"

"I offered to drop it for him, but he wouldn't let me. I didn't insist, as he always put it off—and we had had a quarrel—"

"My poor son!"

"Well, something's got to be done," said Mr. Peele. "I don't like the way he's beginning to breathe.

There are one or two things we can do until the doctor comes."

He raised Beverly's arms above the head, brought them down and pressed them into the chest, repeating the act twenty or thirty times. Beverly meanwhile was breathing stertorously.

"Can't I do something?" cried his mother, distractedly.

"I think we had better walk him," said Mr. Peele, whose mouth was tightening. "Call Hickman."

The butler was waiting in the hall, and came at once. He helped Mr. Peele to lift the young man from the bed. The stalwart figure hung limply between them: he was as collapsed as the new dead. Mr. Peele and Hickman walked him up and down the long line of rooms, shaking him vigorously from time to time; but they would have produced as much effect upon the bolster. Mrs. Peele had sunk into a chair. She sat with compressed lips, and dilating eyes fixed upon Patience. Honora knelt beside her, patting her hand. After a time she arose, liberated Mrs. Peele's hair from its braid and steels, and arranged it with deft hands, fetching some of her own amber pins.

Patience sat on the edge of the bed. She was beginning to feel hopelessly sleepy. The day's excitement had sapped her nerves. It was now nearly two o'clock, and she had not slept. Beverly had been ill the night before and given her little rest. She felt bitterly ashamed of herself; but every few moments she

was obliged to cover her face with her handkerchief to conceal a yawn. Once or twice her head dropped suddenly.

The last time she sat up with a gasp. Mrs. Peele groaned. The two men had entered with their burden. Beverly's face was blue, and he breathed infrequently.

"His body is bathed in a cold perspiration," said Mr. Peele. "Will that doctor never come?"

"Oh my God!" murmured Mrs. Peele.

Patience left the bed and sat on the sill of the window. The night was very hot and still. A shuddering horror took possession of her. A palpable presence seemed skimming the dark gulf under the window. She sat with distended eyes, half expecting to see a long arm reach past her and pluck the soul from the unconscious man on the bed. She closed her eyes and put her fingers in her ears. When she removed them she drew a long breath.

"The doctor is coming," she said. "I hear the wheels."

"Did you make him understand what was the matter?" asked Mr. Peele of the butler.

"Yes, sir. He said he would bring everything necessary."

When the doctor came in he bent over the sick man and lifted his eyelids.

"It is morphine poisoning, sure enough," he said. "Have some black coffee made. I shall use the electricity meanwhile. Better telegraph to New York. I don't like this case, and don't want it alone."

Patience watched them mechanically for an hour, then slipped into her own room and into her bed. Nature had conquered her. Another moment, and she would have fallen to the floor in sleep.

Four hours later she was awakened by a vigorous shaking of her shoulder.

She sat upright and glanced about wildly. "What is it? What is the matter?" she cried. "I had such a horrible dream. I thought Beverly was drowning me—holding me down under the water—"

"Your husband is dead," said the doctor. "Do you wish to go to him?"

Patience shrank under the bedclothes, pulling them about her head. After the doctor had gone she ran over to a spare room, opened all the windows to admit light, then went to bed and slept until late in the day.

BOOK V.

BOOK V.

I.

THE editor-in-chief of the New York "Eye" sat in the large revolving-chair in his private room, dictating to a typewriter answers to the great pile of letters on the desk before him. He opened one letter after another with expert swiftness, glanced over it, gave it a few lines of response, or tossed it, half read, into a waste-basket. But although his heed to duty was alert, his brow was contracted, and he was carrying on a double train of thought. The subconsciousness was not pleasant.

Arnold Sturges was one of the most remarkable men in New York. Not thirty-three, he had been editor-in-chief of one of the great newspapers of the United States for a year and a half. He had elected journalism as the safety-valve for a superabundant nervous energy and a means to gratify ambition and love of power. Although possessed of a little fortune he had begun his career on the city staff. As a reporter he had worked as hard as if twenty-five dollars a week stood between him and starvation. He had risen rapidly from one editorship to another, and still no half naked man down

in the printing-rooms worked more lustily. His rushing career was by no means due to work alone, nor yet to his superlative cleverness: it was said of him that he could smell news a week off, and not only ahead but backward; by which was meant that he knew the subtle and valuable relation that old news occasionally holds to that of the moment. Naturally, he had made many brilliant and memorable coups.

When friends had blocked his way he had thrust them aside as lightly as he seemed to spurn less material obstacles. Body and brain he was the dauntless servant of the "Eye;" its personality was his; his very nerves were tuned to its sensational policy. He lived for it, and would have died for it. He hardly regarded himself as an individual, although his fine intellect, his bold executive ability, his splendid suggestions, had been large factors in the success of the paper.

Cold, cruel, charming, calculating, enthusiastic, audacious, unscrupulous, fearless, relentless, brilliant, executive, had he been a factor in the French Revolution his name would have become infamously immortal. As it was, he was supreme in the field he had deliberately chosen ten years before, immediately after graduating from Harvard with such honours that the faculty had sent for and severally congratulated him upon his future.

He lived with a soubrette with whom he spent his evenings, playing *parchisi*.

To-day he was in a serious quandary. Three days before he had paid fifteen hundred dollars for a scan-

dalous story relative to one of the most fashionable families in Westchester County,—a story which bore truth on the face of it, but which he had not yet published, as it was necessary to go through the form of verification. The family meanwhile had heard of the sale, and brought tremendous pressure to bear upon him to suppress the story: the owner of the "Eye" was travelling in Europe. Lawyers had called and harangued. A woman had gone to his apartment and wept at his feet. A man had flourished a pistol. For tears and threats he cared nothing, but it had occurred to him when too late that the owner of the "Eye" purposed to build in Westchester County and had aspirations to the Country Club. Despite the fact that the story would make the sensation of the day, the owner might be moved to fury. On the other hand, he had paid fifteen hundred dollars for the facts, and must justify himself. It was the first time in his career that he had made a serious mistake, and he was in a cold rage.

The man would have given pleasure to a physiognomist; he was a type so marked, so essentially modern, that an amateur could not have misplaced him, as one easily could so commonplace a type as Beverly Peele. His forehead was full and wide, his grey eyes piercing, restless, hard as ice. The nose was finely cut, the mouth licentious, the face thin and sallow. At each extemity of the jaw was an abnormal development of muscle. His small thin figure was as lithe as a panther, and so crowded with pure nerve force that it seemed to

shed electricity. His attire was fashionable and elegant. In flannel shirt and overalls he would still have looked a product of the higher civilisation.

The door opened. He wheeled about with a frown, then smiled pleasantly.

"Oh, it's you, Van," he said. "I'll be through in a minute. Sit down."

The man that had entered bore so striking a resemblance to Sturges that the two men might have been twins. He was, in fact, three years younger than his brother. Yet there were some points of difference. Van Cortlandt Sturges' mouth was a straight line, his hair was many shades lighter, almost flaxen, and he was several inches taller. But the expression of the upper part of the two faces was identical. He, too, had left Harvard with high honours, and ambition devoured him. Although only thirty he was District Attorney of Westchester County. But as yet his fame had not gone beyond its borders, although within them his dry, incisive, bitter eloquence had carried many juries. Criminals in their cells thought on him with terror. He had sent several men to the chair, but no man that had been defended by Garan Bourke. People said of him lightly that he would not go out of his way to be President of the United States until he had thrashed Bourke on his own ground.

"I'd like ten minutes as soon as possible," he said. "I have an important communication to make."

"I'll hear it now." To the typewriter: "You can

go. Don't return until I ring, and tell Tom to stand in front of the door and admit no one.—Well, what is it?"

"Have you made up your mind to publish that Westchester County scandal?"

"How do you know anything about that?"

"They sent for me yesterday and besought me to use my influence with you. I am engaged to the woman's sister."

"The devil you are! This is bad—bad. But I can't do anything. I paid fifteen hundred dollars for that story."

"I know you did. If I could give you a better, would you let that go?"

"Wouldn't I? It's a white elephant. I thought you didn't know me so little as to come here with sentiment. Fire away."

"Of course you remember the Gardiner Peeles, although you never go anywhere. You went to one or two children's parties there when you were a kid. Well, Beverly Peele died suddenly night before last, supposedly of an overdose of morphine administered by himself. Now, old Lewis, the family physician, is a great friend of mine, and likely to be communicative in his cups. Last night he dined with me, and after he was pretty well loaded told me a remarkable yarn. It seems that Mrs. Beverly had not been on good terms with her husband since the early days of their marriage, and had threatened to leave him from time to time,

He treated her well, and was desperately in love with her. She, as far as is known, had nothing against him but personal dislike. She is said to have frequently expressed hatred of him in violent terms. Well, winter before last she left him, came to New York, and went to work on the 'Day.' The Peeles did everything to induce her to return, but she only consented to go back temporarily this summer to nurse her husband, who had been attacked with a chronic but not immediately fatal complaint. Meanwhile it seems she had fallen in love with someone, and she met him every Thursday in a wood. Jim, a stable-boy, who had been brought up on the place and was devoted to Beverly Peele, watched her, but said nothing to his master, as he was cautiously waiting for some proof of criminality. On the afternoon of Peele's death there was a tremendous scene between the lovers: young Mrs. Peele telling a furious story of her husband's refusal to give her divorce, of his threat to have her watched, to expose her if she took a lover, and to live until ninety if he had to go abroad and live at a foreign spa. She reiterated that she hated him, and had frequently had the impulse to murder him. The lover invited her to go to Texas, and she demurred, as she disliked scandal. Jim told this story to Lewis when driving him home from the death-bed,—his own horse had cast a shoe,—and the doctor advised him to keep quiet.

"The night after the interview between the lovers—or rather the following morning—Peele died of an over-

dose of morphine. She says he took it himself; but it is a remarkable fact that never before—not in a single instance—had he dropped the morphine himself. He had had a nurse from the first, and when the pain was on he shook like a leaf. And yet she asserts that she did not drop it that particular night, and adds—by way of explanation—that they had had a violent quarrel and he had refused to let her wait on him. While he was dying and the others were working over him, she behaved in the most heartless manner,—deliberately went to bed in the next room and went to sleep. When Lewis awakened her, however, and told her that Peele was dead, she displayed symptoms of abject terror, and tore across the hall and locked herself in another room. Now, what do you think of it?"

Sturges' eyes were glittering like smoked diamonds. "My God!" he cried. "That's a grand story! a corker! I'll have Bart Tripp, the best detective reporter in New York, up there inside of two hours. Between whiskey and gold he'll get every fact out of the servants they've got. It's worth two of the other. A young, beautiful, swagger woman accused of murdering her husband, and that husband a Peele of Peele Manor! The 'Eye' will be read in the very bowels of the earth."

"And I shall conduct the case for the prosecution."

"The 'Eye' will let people know it. Don't worry about that. Does Lewis remember that he told you?"

"Not a word."

II.

On the following Sunday Patience arose early. Beverly had been in the family vault down in the hollow for a week. She had wished to leave immediately after the funeral, but had remained at the insistence of Hal, who had returned at once, and was doubly depressed by her brother's death and the gloomy house. Mrs. Peele had gone to bed with a violent attack of neuralgia some days ago, and had not risen since. Honora was in constant attendance. Mr. Peele never opened his lips except to ask for what he wanted. Burr, as a matter of course, spent the days in New York or at a private club-house in the neighbourhood.

Patience had moved into a room adjoining Hal's. She kept the light burning all night.

"I'll be all right when I get back to New York," she said, "but I have a horror of death. I can't help it."

"Who hasn't?" asked Hal. "I wish I were a man —or could be as selfish as one."

On this Sunday morning Patience rose after a restless night, and went downstairs as soon as she was dressed. The "Day" and the "Eye"—Burr's favourite newspaper—lay on a table in the hall. She carried them into the library and turned them over listlessly,

then remembered that a great Westchester County scandal had been promised for the Sunday "Eye" by the issue of the day before, and that Hal and Burr were on the alert, suspecting that they half knew the story already.

She opened the "Eye" and glanced at the headlines of the first page. In the place of honour, the extreme left hand column, she found her story:

WAS IT MURDER?

AN OLD MANOR HOUSE IN WESTCHESTER COUNTY MAY HAVE BEEN THE THEATRE OF A GREAT CRIME!

A YOUNG WIFE SUSPECTED OF THE FOUL DEED!

Patience read ten lines. Then she stumbled to her feet, spilling the papers to the floor. Her skin felt cold and wet, her knees trembled, her hands moved spasmodically. Something within her seemed disintegrating.

She got to the door and up to her room. Aside from the horror which sat in each nerve-centre and jabbered, she was conscious of but one idea: she must fly. She flung off her robe and put on the black frock she had bought out of deference to the family's grief. She scratched herself and thrust the buttons into the wrong holes, but she could call no one to her assistance. She was thankful it was so early; she could get away without encountering any of the family. She was about to put on her black bonnet when her muddled consciousness emitted another flash and bade her disguise

herself; detectives would have orders to search for a woman in weeds. She tore off the mourning frock, dropping it to the floor, and got herself into a grey one, then pinned on a grey hat trimmed with pink flowers. She thrust a few things into a bag, and ran down the stair. She reached the station in time to flag the 8.30 train for New York. Someone else boarded the same train, but she did not see him.

Having accomplished her flight, her thoughts travelled to the objective point. Inevitably her woman's instinct turned to the man whose duty it was to protect her. She convinced herself femininely that if she could reach him all would be well; he not only loved her, but he was so amazingly clever.

At the station in New York she walked deliberately to a cab and gave the man Morgan Steele's address. She looked neither to the right nor to the left, consequently did not see that the man who had boarded the train at Peele Manor stood at her elbow when she gave the order, and followed her immediately.

When the cab reached the house in which Morgan Steele lived, she dismissed it and ran up the steps. She rang again and again, pacing the narrow stoop in an agony of fear and impatience. At the end of ten minutes an irritable half-dressed Frenchman came shuffling down the stairs. There were no curtains on the door, and the man's expression struck new terror to her heart.

"What is it?" he asked surlily, as he opened the door.

"I—I—must see Mr. Steele."

"Mr. Steele is asleep. He does not receive visitors at this hour."

"I must see him." Her cheeks were flaming under the man's scrutiny. "Here," she opened her purse and gave him a bill, then pushed him aside and ran upstairs. She remembered that Steele had told her that his rooms were on the second floor, front. The halls were as dark as midnight. She had to feel with her hands for a door. There was one at the end facing the hall. She knocked so loudly that Steele sprang out of bed.

"What is it?" he cried.

"It is I. Open the door—quick!"

Steele made no reply until he opened a door at the side of the hall. He had tied himself into a bath robe.

"Good heavens!" he said, "why have you come here? Are you mad?"

"Oh, I think I am. Lock the door—quick. Oh, haven't you heard? Didn't you know about it before? The 'Day' is right next door to the 'Eye.' Why didn't you warn me?"

"What on earth are you talking about? What has happened? Do sit down and calm yourself."

"The 'Eye' is out with a big story that I murdered Beverly Peele. That is what is the matter."

"What? Oh, you poor child! The damned rascals! But you shouldn't have come here. Don't you know that the 'Eye' will watch every move you make? It takes the clever woman to do the wrong thing, every time!"

He went to the window and peered out, then clenched his teeth, and raising his arm brought it down violently.

"They can't put me in prison, can they?"

He pressed his finger to a bell. "I must read what they have to say. They are very wary, and never would have printed such a story unless they had had a good deal of circumstantial evidence. But they will need a terrible lot to convict you. Don't worry."

"Oh, how can you be so cool?"

"Someone has to be cool, my dear girl. If you cannot think I must think for you." A man has not much sentiment at that hour of the morning; still, Steele had sympathy in his nature, and was profoundly disturbed.

The servant came up with the newspapers, and Steele ordered coffee and rolls from the restaurant below. He threw himself into a chair, opened the "Eye," and read the story through deliberately, word for word, while Patience walked nervously up and down the room. When he had finished he laid the newspaper on the table.

"It's a damned bad case," he said.

"You don't believe I did it, do you?"

He looked at her for a moment with his peculiarly

searching gaze. "No," he said, "you didn't do it. You'd be even more interesting if you had. But that's not the question. We've got to make others believe you didn't do it. The first thing for you to do is to go directly back to Peele Manor. Tell them you came up to see Miss Merrien and to engage rooms. Anything you like—only go back there and wait. If you are arrested, it must be from there, and there must be no suggestion of fear on your part—you must brace up and carry it off."

The waiter entered with the coffee and rolls, and Steele made her drink and eat.

"It is 9.45," he said. "You can catch a train that goes between ten and eleven."

When Patience had finished she drew on her gloves. "I'll go," she said, "and I'll try to do as you say. I've made a fool of myself, but I won't again—I promise. I can be as cold as stone, you know. That's the New England part of me. And so long as I know that you care I sha'n't break down—in public at least."

"Oh, I care fast enough—poor little woman. Here, leave that bag, for heaven's sake. You mustn't go back with that."

III.

WHEN Patience arrived at Peele Manor she knew before she reached the house that her story had been read and told. The gardener turned on his heel as she passed him and walked hastily away. A new stable-boy stared at her until she thought his eyes would fly from their sockets.

As she entered the front-door, Hal ran forward and threw her arms about her.

"Oh, Patience! Patience!" she sobbed hysterically. "That brutal paper! How could they do such a thing? Have they no heart nor soul?"

"You don't believe it then?" said Patience, gratefully.

"Of course I don't believe it—believe such a thing of *you!* Oh, I'm so glad you've come back. They were all sure you'd run away; but I knew you hadn't. It is only the guilty that hide—But why on earth did you put on that grey frock?"

"Oh, I don't know. How can one know what one's doing— What does your father say?"

The girls were in one of the small reception-rooms. Hal removed Patience's hat and gloves.

"Oh, this has been the most terrible day of my life,"

she said evasively. "But you must be prudent, Patience dear. You must wear black—What is it?"

A servant had entered the room.

"Mr. Peele would like to see Mrs. Beverly in the library!"

Patience rose and shook herself a little, as if she would shake her nerves into place. Hal's face flushed, and she turned away.

As Patience crossed the hall she met Latimer Burr. He held out his hand and pressed hers warmly.

"This is terrible, Patience," he said; "but remember that Hal and I are always your friends. If the worst comes to the worst I'll send you my attorney. Remember that, and don't engage anyone else, for he's one of the ablest criminal lawyers in the country."

"Oh, you are good!" she said. She smiled even through the grateful tears which sprang to her eyes. Burr had grown a visible inch. His chest and lips were slightly extended.

Mr. Peele sat in a large chair, his elbows on the arms, his finger-tips lightly pressed together. As Patience stood before him she felt as if transfixed by two steel lances.

"You murdered my son."

"I did not." Her courage came back to her under the overt attack.

"You murdered my son. The evidence is conclusive to me as a lawyer—and to my knowledge of you. My error was that I regarded your threats as feminine

ravings. I wish you to leave my house at once—within the hour. I shall not have you arrested, but if you are I shall appear against you; and I have some evidence, as you will admit. You have dishonoured an ancient house," he continued with cold passion, "and you have left it without an heir. Its name, after nearly three hundred years in this country alone, must die with me. If you had borne a son I should move heaven and earth to get you out of the country, but now I hope to heaven you'll go to the chair."

Patience shuddered and chilled, but she answered: "You despised your son, and you should be thankful that he left no second edition of himself."

"He was my son, and the last of his name. Now, kindly leave this house."

Patience went up to her room and began to pack her trunk. Hal followed, and when she heard what her father had said cried bitterly. She helped Patience to pack, assisted her into the black clothes, then walked to the station with her and stood conspicuously on the platform, waving her hand as the train moved off.

IV.

PATIENCE went directly to her old quarters in Forty-Fourth Street. She told the cabman not to lift her trunk down until she ascertained if there was a vacant room in the house. The bell was answered by a maid that had been there in her time. The girl stifled a scream and fled. Patience shut the door behind her with a hand that trembled again, and went slowly upstairs to Miss Merrien's room. A solemn voice answered her knock. When she opened the door Miss Merrien sprang up and came forward. Her face was drawn, her eyes were red.

"Oh, Mrs. Peele!" she cried.

"Do you believe it? If you do, I'll go at once."

"Of course I don't believe it! How can you ask me? Sit down. How good of you to come here. Tell me—are you terribly frightened?"

"No, I don't think I am now. Why should I be? If I am so unlucky as to have been tossed up in the news hat of the 'Eye,' I cannot help it; and I suppose this is only the beginning. If I have to go to jail I have to, and that is the end of it; but they cannot possibly convict me, for I am innocent."

"Oh, you always were the bravest woman I ever knew. It is like you— Come."

The door opened, and the landlady entered and closed it carefully behind her. She was a tall, thin, elderly woman with a refined face stamped with commercial unquiet. Her grey hair was piled high. Her voice was low, and well modulated. She looked at Patience out of faded blue eyes in which there was a faint sparkle of resentment.

"I see that you have a trunk on your cab, Mrs. Peele," she said, "I am very sorry that I have no room."

"I had no intention of asking you for a room," said Patience, haughtily. "I merely came to call on Miss Merrien; and as I have only a few moments to spare, I should be obliged if you would leave us alone."

The landlady retired in disorder, and Miss Merrien exhausted her vocabulary of invective.

"What is the use?" said Patience. "She is right. In the struggle for bread-and-butter it must be self first, last, and always. If it were known—as it would be—that I had been arrested from her house, every other lodger would leave. Well, I must go roof-hunting." She laughed suddenly. "If I do go to jail I suppose you'll come to interview me. I hope so. Good-bye."

Miss Merrien, although not a demonstrative girl, kissed her affectionately. "The 'Day' will defend you for all it's worth—you know that. And I needn't say anything about myself."

Patience told her cabman to drive to the Holland House, but when he stopped there she did not get out.

Reflection had convinced her that no hotel in New York would take her in. She dared not give a false name lest her motive should be misconstrued. She put her head out of the window and gave the man Rosita's address.

"There is no other way," she thought. "I cannot live in a cab. Mrs. Field would take me in, but I have no right to make such a test of friendship as that."

Rosita received her with open arms. She was looking very beautiful in flowing nainsook and lace, and exhaled a new and delicious perfume.

"Patita! Patita *mia!*" she purred. *"Pobrecita!* Who would have thought that this would happen to my *lili.*" (Her accent was more pronounced than ever.)

"Can I stay with you until they arrest me, or this blows over?"

"You shall stay with me forever. 'Are we not bound by the ties of childhood?' That is a line in my new opera. Isn't it funny? Ay, Patita, I am so sorry." And she sent down for the trunk and removed Patience's hat.

V.

THE next morning Patience was awakened by Rosita's ecstatic voice. She opened her eyes to see her hostess standing at the bedside, the "Eye" in her hand, her face radiant.

"Patita!" she cried. "Read it—there is a whole column about you and me."

Patience sat up in bed. "Is that why you were so glad to have me come here?" she asked.

"Patita! Do not look at me like that. Oh, if I could only look that way when I am stage mad!—but they always say I look like an angry baby. Of course, that was not the reason, Patita *mia;* but it is heavenly to be written about; do not you think so? And, of course, every new story about me—and such a sensation as this—means a perfect rush—"

"Give me the paper, please."

She read the column while Rosita pattered back to her room and ate her dainty breakfast. Every move she had made on the day before was chronicled. On another page an editorial commented on the facts of her having visited a young man's apartment, and finally taken refuge with the notorious Spanish woman.

She dressed herself hastily in her black garments, and locked and strapped her trunk. "I'll go straight

down and give myself up," she thought. "It's what I ought to have done yesterday. It's eleven o'clock. I wish it were nine. Come."

"Two gentlemen to see madame," said the maid.

"What—who—what do they look like?"

"Like policemen, and yet not, madame."

Patience gasped. Her knees gave way. Again she experienced that horrible feeling of disintegration. Her untasted breakfast stood on a table by the bed. She hastily drank a cup of black coffee, then walked steadily to the drawing-room.

"You have come for me?" she asked of the men.

"Yes, ma'am."

"Where am I to go?"

"To the jail at White Plains, Westchester County. You are arrested on a charge of murder;" and he displayed the warrant.

Patience touched the bell-button. "Take my trunk downstairs to the cab," she said to the butler. Then she stepped to the *portières* and said good-bye to Rosita.

"She's a cool one," said one man to the other. "She done it."

They went down in the elevator. As they left it, one of the men preceded her, the other followed close. Both entered the cab with her. She felt that they were regarding her with the frank curiosity of their kind, and kept her eyes fixed on the street with an expressionless stare. On the train they gave her a seat to herself, each taking the outside of another, one before

and one behind. The passengers did not suspect the meaning of the party. She saw no one she knew. It was not the line that passed Peele Manor. For small mercies she was duly thankful. She guessed, however, that a meagre wiry black-eyed young man on the opposite side of the aisle, a man with a mean, sharp, common face, was Bart Tripp. He stared at her until she thought she should scream aloud, or, what would be almost as fatal, relax the proud calm of her face. It was with a sigh of profound relief that she stepped from the train at White Plains.

"We won't meet no one," said one of the detectives, as they entered the hack. "The sheriff's got ready for you, I guess; he was wired yesterday; but we took good care not to say what train we was coming on, so there wouldn't be no crowd. Feeling's pretty high against you, I guess."

As they drove through the ugly little town, Patience wondered why it was called White Plains. She had never seen a more undulating country. One or two of the environing hills were almost perpendicular. She also noticed with the minute observance of persons approaching crises, that the court-house was a big handsome building of grey stone, and decided that she liked its architecture. The extension behind, one of the keepers told her, was the jail.

She was escorted before a police justice, who read the charge and explained such privileges as the law allowed her; then to the sheriff's office, where she was

registered. A crowd of men were in the office. They watched her with deep but respectful attention, as she answered the many questions put to her, but she managed to maintain her impassive demeanour. There was a buzz of excitement by this time all through the court-house, and a little of it began to communicate itself to her. The few that are sustained through life's trials by public interest are immeasurably fortunate. Before the sheriff—who could not have treated her with more consideration were she a dethroned queen—had finished, word had gone up into the court-room, and a sudden trampling on the back-stair indicated that the case in hand had lost its interest.

"That's all," said the sheriff, hurriedly. "Guess you'd better get along.—Tarbox," he called.

A short, stout man with a ruddy, kind face came forward, offered Patience his arm, pushed his way through the crowd of men in the hall, and led her out of a back-door and down a long yard beside the jail. At the end of the building he inserted a key in a lock.

"Go right up, ma'am," he said politely, and she ascended a narrow flight of stairs. At its head he unlocked another door, and again they ascended, again a door was unlocked. Then Patience stepped into a long, low, clean, well-lighted room. In the middle of its length was a stove over which a kettle boiled. On a bench sat four women. At each end and on one side were low grated windows. On the other side were a number of grated doors.

The man led Patience to the upper end of the room and swung open the door of the corner cell. It was a large cell, and had it not been for the low window with its iron bars would have been in no wise different from any room of simple comfort. A red carpet covered the floor. The bed in the corner was fresh and spotless. The rest of the furniture was new and convenient. There were even a large rocker and a student's lamp. Over the door a curtain had been hung.

"Why!" exclaimed Patience, "are all prison cells like this?"

"No, ma'am, they're not; but you see when we have a lady—which isn't often—we do what we can to make her feel at home. We can't afford to forget that this is the swell county of New York, you know. And of course you're the finest person we've ever had. You'll be treated well here,—you needn't worry about that. I'll order one of them girls outside to wait on you."

"You are very good." For the first time tears threatened.

"Well, I'll try to be to you, ma'am. I'm John Tarbox, deputy sheriff, jailor, warden, and all the rest of it. I shall look after you. I'll call twice a day, and anything you want you'll get. If any of them hussies out there get to fighting just sing out of the window, and I'll lock them up."

"You won't lock me in?"

"Oh, no—there's no need for that. This cell's no stronger than the whole place. Well, make yourself

comfortable. I'll send over to the hotel to get a lunch for you. You must be hungry. Keep a stiff upper lip."

Patience, when she was alone, drew a long breath and looked about her. The cheerful room, the unexpected kindness of the sheriffs, had raised her spirits. She took off her hat and tossed it on the bed.

"I may as well take the situation humorously," she thought. "It helps more than anything else in life, I've discovered. This can't last forever, and they can't convict me. The serious people of this world have always struck me as being the most farcical. So here goes my ninth or tenth lesson in philosophy. Such is life."

After luncheon Mag, the improvised maid, unpacked the trunk and shook out the pretty garments with many expressions of rapture. Patience gave her a red frock, and the girl was her slave thenceforth.

The afternoon hours revolved like a clogged wheel in a muddy stream. Excitement and novelty kept horror at bay, but she knew that it lurked, biding its time.

When night came she lit the lamp and tried to read a magazine that Tarbox had brought her; but it fell from her hands again and again. Her ears acted independently of her will. She had never known so terrible a stillness. The women had gone to bed at half-past seven. No voice came from the distant street. The silence of eternity seemed to have descended upon those massive walls.

She was in jail!

She sprang to her feet, shuddering; then set her teeth and knelt by the window.

The heat-waves of August hid the stars. Beyond the jail-yard was a mass of buildings, but no light in any window. Now and again a tramp came forth from his quarters on the ground-floor and strolled about the yard, smoking his pipe; but he made no sound, and in his grey dilapidation looked like a parodied ghost. One of the women cursed loudly in her sleep, then collapsed into silence. An engine whistle shrieked, hilarious with freedom, but the rattle of the train was too distant to carry to straining ears.

She clutched the bars and shook them, then crouched, trembling and gasping. She dropped forward, resting her face on her arms. Her fine courage retreated, and mocked her. She had no wish to recall it. She longed passionately for the strong arm and the strong soul of a man. The independence and self-reliance which Circumstance had implanted, seemed to fade out of her; she was woman symbolised. No shipwrecked mariner was ever so desolate; for nothing in all life is so tragic as a woman forced to stand and do battle alone.

It was only when she arose, shivering and exhausted, and groped her way to bed, that it occurred to her that in those appalling moments she had not thought of Morgan Steele.

VI.

In the morning she awoke with a start and a chill, and sprang out of bed, governed by an impulse to fling herself against the bars. But sleep had refreshed her, and she sat down and reasoned herself into courage and hope once more. The tussle with the world develops the iron in a woman's blood, and Patience's experiences of the last year and a half stood her in good stead now. When the girl came in to arrange her room and Tarbox brought her breakfast, the commonplace details completed her poise. The morning mail brought her letters from Steele and Hal.

DEAR GIRL [Steele's ran],—You are blue and frightened and lonesome. I wish I were there to cheer you up. But the first day will be the worst. Remember that liberty is not far off. They cannot convict you. I shall see you a few hours after you get this.

M. S.

Oh, Patience dear [Hal had written], it has come! I wish I could tell you how terribly I feel. But cheer up, old girl! It will come out all right—I know it will. Latimer is hustling me out of the country so I cannot appear as a witness—he says I would do you more harm than good. But he will stay and see you through. His attorney will call on you at once. I send you a box to cheer you up a little. Do write to me, and always remember that I am your sister

HAL.

The box arrived an hour later. It contained her silver toilet-set, and all the paraphernalia of a well-

groomed and pretty woman, a bottle of cologne, a box of candy, eight French novels, a large box of handsome writing paper, and a bolt of black satin ribbon. Patience arranged the toilet-set on the bureau, halved the candy with the women, then sat down with a volume of Bourget. When Tarbox came up an hour later with a card she was still reading, and quite herself.

"Well," he said, "I'm glad, I am, to see you so contented and so cool," he added, mopping his brow. "This gent is below. He says he's one of the lawyers in the case. I hoped you'd have Bourke. He's the smartest man in Westchester County! Shall I tell him to come up, or would you like to see him down in the sheriff's office? Anything to please you."

"Oh, here, by all means, if he doesn't mind the stairs."

Tarbox gazed at her admiringly. "Well, ma'am," he ejaculated, "you are cool, but I for one believe it's the coolness of innocence. You never did murder!" and he walked hastily away as if ashamed of his enthusiasm.

The lawyer's card bore the name of Eugene A. Simms. He came up at once, a short thick-set man of thirty, with a square, shrewd, dogged face, a low brow, a snub nose, and black, brilliant, hard eyes. He came in with a bustling, aggressive, businesslike air, scanning Patience as if he expected to find all the points of the case written upon her. Patience conceived an immediate and violent dislike to him.

"Will you sit down?" she said stiffly. "You are Mr. Burr's lawyer, I believe."

"Oh, no. That's Bourke. He has charge of the case. I'm getting it up. I shall attend the coroner's inquest and get the case in shape for Mr. Bourke to conduct."

The blood rose to Patience's hair aud receded to her heart, which changed its time; but she asked no questions.

Simms leaned forward and fixed her with his unpleasant eyes. "Be perfectly frank with me," he said, abruptly. "It's best. We can't work in the dark. We'll pull you through; that's what we are here for."

"You take it for granted that I am guilty, I suppose?"

"I'm bound to say that all the revealed facts point that way. But of course that makes no difference to us. In fact, the harder a case is the better Bourke likes it—"

"Does Mr. Bourke believe that I am guilty?"

"I haven't discussed it with him. He merely called me in, put the facts in my hands, and told me to go to work. I haven't seen him since."

"I will be perfectly frank with you," said Patience, who had recovered herself. "I did not murder Mr. Peele. I am not wholly an idiot. If I had wished to poison him do you suppose I would have selected the drug I was known to administer?"

"You might have done it in a moment of passion. You had had a quarrel with him that night."

"So much the more reason why I would not make such a fatal mistake. It is quite true that when in a passion I frequently expressed the wish to kill him. I will also tell you that one night when dropping the morphine I was seized with an uncontrollable impulse to give him a double dose. I dropped twenty-six drops. But fortunately it takes some time to do that, and meanwhile the impulse weakened, and I anathematised myself as a fool. No man nor woman of respectable brains ever made a mistake like that."

"What is your own theory?"

"I hardly believe that he committed suicide. I think that he was wild with pain, and did not count the drops. He was probably half blind. On the other hand, he was capable of anything when in a rage."

Mr. Simms scraped the floor with his boot-heels and beat a tattoo on his knee with his fingers. "Very well," he said at last. "We take your word, of course. Now tell me as nearly as you can, every circumstance of that night, and give me a general idea of your relations with him and your reasons for leaving him. It is going to be one of the biggest fights this State has ever seen, and we want all the help you can give us."

After he had gone Patience fell into a rage. Why had not Bourke come himself instead of sending his underling? If he hesitated to meet her after the abominable words he had used that second night at Peele Manor why had he undertaken her case at all? Her pride revolted at the thought of being defended by

him, of owing her life to him. Once she was at the point of writing him a haughty note declining to accept his services; but Latimer Burr's kindness deserved a more gracious acknowledgment. Again, she took up her pen to inform him that unless he apologised he must understand that she could have no relations with him; but her lively fear of making herself ridiculous came to the rescue, and she threw the pen aside. She resumed her novel, but it had lost its flavour. Bourke's face was on every page. The interview in the elm-walk wrote itself between the French lines; and the subsequent conversation in the library danced in letters of red. She hated Bourke the more bitterly because he had once been something more to her than any other man had been. She worked herself into such a bad-humour that she almost snubbed Miss Merrien and a "Day" artist who came to interview and sketch her; and when Morgan Steele arrived, late in the afternoon, she was as perverse and unreasonable as if the widowed châtelaine of Peele Manor with the world at her feet. He understood her mood perfectly, although not the cause of it, and guyed her into good-humour and her native sense of the ridiculous.

"Oh, I do like you," she said. "You understand me so. Any other man would go off in a huff. And I won't always be like this. I suppose I am nervous and upset and all the rest of it. Who wouldn't be? And you know I am tremendously fond of you."

"I know you are," he said dryly. "As you will have

ample time for reflection and meditation in the next few months, you will find out just how fond. But I am more glad than I can say to find you in this mood. It is as healthy as irritability in illness. I am even willing to be sacrificed."

Patience put out her hand and patted his soft hair with a spasm of genuine affection. "You are the dearest boy in the world," she said, "and I do love you. For all your uncanny wisdom and cold-blooded philosophy you are just a big, lovable, good-natured boy."

"Just the kind of fellow a woman would like to have for a brother, in short."

"No! No! I think it will be the most charming thing in the world to be married to you. You are such a compound. You will interest me forever. Most people are such bores after a little."

"If you hadn't started out in life with ideas upside-down, you would really love me in loving me no more than you do now. But ideals and the fixed idea have got to be worked out to the bitter end, as you are fond of remarking. In reality, happiness means a comfortable state of affairs between a man and a woman with plenty of brains, philosophy, and passion, who are wholly congenial in these three matters, and have chucked their illusions overboard. However, we won't discuss the matter any further at present. How do you like being the sensation of the day?"

"Am I?"

"Are you? Every newspaper in town had a big

story this morning, and of course the news has gone all over the country. Nothing else is to be heard in the trains or in Park Row. Oh, you will have plenty to sustain you. Lots of women would give their heads to be in your place."

He dined with her and remained until eight o'clock. After he had gone, Patience sat for some time lost in a pleasurable reverie. He always left her in a good-humour, and she unquestionably loved him. Few women could help loving Morgan Steele. She sighed once as she reflected that love was not the tremendous passion she had once imagined it to be; in all her dreams she had never pictured it as a restful and tranquillising element; but she conceded that Steele's philosophy was correct.

And if he did not inspire her with a mightier passion it was her fault, not his. Miss Merrien had told her of one brilliant newspaper woman who had made a wilful idiot of herself on his behalf, and of a popular and gifted actress who at one time had taken to haunting the "Day" office, much to the enjoyment of his fellow editors and to his own futile wrath.

"No," she thought, "I made a mistake once, and the shock was so great that it either benumbed or stunted me; or else the imaginary me was killed and the real developed. And after such a marriage I doubt if there are depths or heights left in one's nature."

Then her mind drifted to her predicament, and she wondered that the workings of fear had so wholly

ceased. "I suppose it is because that man is going to defend me," she said, ruthlessly, at last. "They say he could save a man that had been caught driving a knife into another man's heart with a hammer; so it is quite natural that I should feel safe."

VII.

THE next day a box of books and periodicals arrived from Steele. Rosita thoughtfully subscribed to a clipping bureau, and sent Patience daily a heavy package of "stories," editorials, and telegrams of which she was the heroine. Patience became so bewildered over the contradictory descriptions of her personal appearance, the various versions of her marital drama, the hundred and one theories for the murder and defence, the ingenious analyses of her character, and the conflicting information regarding her girlhood, that she wondered sometimes if a person could come forth from the hands of so many creators and retain any original birthmarks. The "Eye" telegraphed to its correspondent in San Francisco to investigate her childhood, and the correspondent evidently interviewed all her old enemies. Her mother's happy career was detailed with glee, and her own "sulky, moody, eccentric, murderous propensities" were brilliantly epitomised. The story was entitled "She Tried To Murder Her Mother," and the

"Eye's" perfervid joy at this discovery throbbed in an editorial.

The story was copied the length and breadth of the United States; but it is only fair to add that Mr. Field's eloquent leaders in her defence were as widely quoted.

Miss Beale came to see her at once, and after a few tears and an emphatic warning that "this terrible ordeal was the logical punishment of her blasphemy of and disrespect to the Lord," announced her intention to sit by her during the trial, and let the jury see what a president of the W. C. T. U. thought of a prisoner whose life was in their hands. Patience told her that she loved her, and indeed was deeply grateful.

She spent her mornings reading the newspapers and attending to her correspondence. Tarbox always paid her a short call, and usually discoursed of Garan Bourke, whom he admired extravagantly. For a half-hour before luncheon she permitted her fellow prisoners to sit before her in a wondering semi-circle while she manicured her nails and drew vivid word-pictures of the superior comforts incident upon the resignation of alcohol. With the exception of Mag they were weather-beaten creatures, with hollow eyes and weak pathetic mouths. They admired Patience superlatively. She was touched by their devotion, and occasionally read them the funny stories in the illustrated weeklies. They listened with open mouth and voiceless laughter, which, however, expressed itself vocally when the stories were

told in Irish or German dialect. Patience gave them the papers, and they pasted the pictures on the walls of the corridor. Never before had the female ward of the White Plains Jail presented so festive an appearance. When the W. C. T. U. ladies came to sing to the prisoners they were inclined to be horrified; but Patience assured them that love of art, however manifested, was a hopeful sign.

She was very comfortable. She had saved a thousand dollars,—to be exact, Miss Merrien had saved them for her,—and she could command all the small luxuries of prison life. The ugly walls of her cell had been draped with red cloth, and a low bookcase was rapidly filling with the literature of the moment. She would never have consented to save those thousand dollars had not Miss Merrien represented that by judicious economy she could manage to spend every third year abroad. They did her good service now; she could accept great favours, but not small ones. Graceful tributes were to be expected by every charming woman; but if she had been dependent upon friends for the small comforts of her daily life she would have gone without them.

The W's and Y's of Mariaville forgave her, and brought her flowers, tracts, and spiritual admonitions. She received the former with gratitude and the latter with grace. Miss Merrien came as often as her duties permitted, and so did all the other newspaper women she had ever known or heard of. She was interviewed

for nearly every newspaper in the Union, and in most cases treated with sensational kindness. Many strangers and a few old friends called.

Steele came regularly once a week. He dared not come oftener. The "lover in the case" was still a mystery, and it was as well that he should remain so. Five other newspaper men lived in his house; therefore Patience's visit had told Bart Tripp nothing beyond the fact that she had indubitably called on a young man at his apartments at a quarter past nine in the morning.

But despite the fact that much of her time was occupied Patience grew very restless and nervous, after the novelty wore off. She spent hours pacing up and down the corridor, and every evening after dark Tarbox took her out in the jail-yard for a walk; but she had been used to long walks and hours in the open air all her life, and no woman ever lived less suited to routine and restraint of any sort. Fear did not return, although the coroner's jury had pronounced her guilty and she had been indicted by the Grand Jury.

VIII.

When the dark days of winter came little light struggled through the low grating, and she was obliged to keep her lamp burning most of the time. Steele sent her one with a rose-coloured shade which shed a cheerful light but hurt her eyes. When the storms

began visitors came infrequently. Moreover, as public interest cannot be kept at concert pitch for any length of time, there was less and less about her in the newspapers. Steele, who understood the intimate relationship between public interest and the resignation of a prisoner, assured her that when her trial came off in March she would once more be the popular news of the day.

At first the monotony of the long, silent winter days was intolerable. But gradually, by such short degrees, that she hardly realised the change taking place within her, she grew to love her solitude and to be grateful for it. For the first time since she had left Monterey her hours were absolutely her own. She had longed for the solitude of a forested mountain top. From her prison window she could see the naked tops of a clump of trees above the buildings opposite, and even her obedient imagination could not expand them to primeval heights; but at least she had solitude and not a petty detail to annoy her.

She sometimes wondered if it mattered where one spent the few years of this unsatisfactory life. Nothing was of permanent satisfaction. Strongly as she had been infatuated with newspaper work the interest would have lasted only just so long. She found her modernity slipping from her, herself relapsing into the dreaming child of the tower with vague desire for something her varied experience of the world had not helped her to find. Inevitably she came to know herself and the

large demands of her nature, and as inevitably she said to Morgan Steele one day,—

"I think you have known all along that it was a mistake."

"Yes," he said, "I have known it."

"You have everything — everything, — good looks and distinction, brains and modernity, magnetism of a queer, cold sort, knowledge of women and kindness of heart—I cannot understand. But the spark, the response, the exaltation is not there,—the splendid rush of emotion. I love you, but not in the way that makes matrimony marriage."

He looked at her with his peculiar smile, an expansion of one corner of his mouth which gave him something of the expression of a satyr. "You were badly in need of a companion, and you found one in me. You wanted to be understood, and I understood you. You wanted sympathy, and I sympathised with you; but I am not the man, and I have never for one moment deluded myself."

"Then why would you have allowed me to drift into matrimony with you?—as I should have done if I had not come here."

"Because the experiment would have been no more dangerous than most matrimonial experiments. And it would have been very delightful for a time."

"I should have loved you a good deal," she said musingly, "and habit is a tremendous force. And I should never have permitted myself to recognise a

mistake again—if the decisive step had been taken. Tell me—" she added abruptly, "do you believe that if I had married you you would always have loved me?"

"I certainly should never have been so unwise as to promise to, for that is something no man can foretell. The chances are that I should not. All phases of feeling are temporary,—all emotions, all desires, all fulfilment. Life itself is temporary."

"Should you have been true to me?"

"O-h-h, how in thunder can a man answer a question like that? That is something he never knows till the time comes. If he is sensible he wastes no time making resolutions, and if he is honest he makes no promises."

"You do not love me," she exclaimed triumphantly.

"I am merely more honest, perhaps more analytical than most men,—that is all. The man who swears he will love forever the woman that pleases him most is simply talking from the depths of ignorance straight up through his hat. No man knows anything—what he will do or feel to-morrow. He knows nothing of himself until his time comes to die, and then he knows blamed little."

Patience shook her head. "I don't know. You may be right in the analysis, but I think you lose a good deal. Love may be a species of insanity, but the man whose brain is crystal is not to be envied by the man whose brain can scorch reason and thought at

times. You may save yourself heartbreak, but you miss heaven. If you are a type of the future, woman will change too. Man has been at woman's feet throughout the centuries. You and your kind will place her on an exact level with yourselves and teach her that love means a comfortable coupling of personalities. Something primitive has gone out of you. You have every ingredient in your make-up except love. Liking and passion don't make love. When it fades out of man altogether chivalry and homage will go with it. You would do a great deal for me, but you are incapable of any splendid self-sacrifice. You are entirely selfish, although in the most charming way."

"You are quite right," he said smiling, "I have not much love in me; just enough to make life a comfortable and pleasant sojourn, but not enough to induce a regret were I obliged to toss it over to-morrow—"

"Nor to make it a life of bitter misery did I leave it."

"No—to be perfectly frank I should not be bitterly miserable. I should regret—but I should work and readjust myself. I have never yet given a glance to the past. I give few to the future. No man gets more out of the present—"

"I won't be loved like that," said Patience, passionately.

He leaned forward and took her hand, patting it gently. "You have depths and heights in your nature which I fully appreciate but which I could never stir nor satisfy," he said. "Some man will. It won't be

all that you expect—you have too much imagination—but you will have your day. With your nature that is inevitable. I am sorry to give you up. You are the most delightful woman I shall ever know. And if you had married me things would probably have gone along satisfactorily enough. I should have kept your mind occupied and talked to you about yourself—those are the secrets of success in matrimony."

"Marriage with you would be like playing at matrimony. I want a home and husband and children. I have seen enough to know that unless one is a fanatic like Miss Tremont or Miss Beale, or the temporary result of a new and forced civilisation like Hal, or a mercenary wanton like Rosita—in short, if one is woman *par excellence,* and most of us, clever or otherwise, even gifted, usually are, nothing else is worth the toil and perplexity of being alive. But you mustn't leave me," she added hurriedly; "I can't stand it here if you don't come to see me."

"I shall come exactly as I have done. Why not? Our love-making has barely progressed beyond friendship: we shall hardly recognise any change. I should feel lost if I could not have a talk with you once in a while. I intend to have that for the rest of my life. It isn't usually the man that proposes the brother racket, but I merely define the basis upon which we have really stood all along."

After he had gone Patience drew a long sigh of relief. The first terrible mistake of her life was buried

with Beverly Peele. A second had been averted. Something seemed rebuilding within her: the undeflected continuation of the little girl in the tower. For the first time she understood herself as absolutely as mortal can; and she paid a tribute to the zigzag of life which had helped her to that final understanding.

IX.

On the third of February she received a letter, the handwriting of whose address made her change colour: she had seen it once on Mrs. Peele's desk. It was the first communication of any sort that she had received from the man who was to defend her life. She opened the letter with angry curiosity.

My dear Mrs. Peele, [it read],—You will pardon me I am sure for not having called before this when I tell you that I have had a rush of civil cases which have hardly given me time for sleep and have kept me constantly in New York. And of course you have understood that there was really nothing I could do until my able confederate, Mr. Simms, had gathered in and digested all the facts in the case. Now, however, I am free, and the time has come when I shall be obliged to see you twice a week until the first of March. I have worked the harder in order to be at liberty to devote myself wholly to your case. Need I add how absolute that devotion will be, my dear Mrs. Peele, or how entirely every resource I possess shall be at your service?

At two o'clock on Monday I shall be in the sheriff's private office with Mr. Simms and my assistant, Mr. Lansing, Will you kindly meet us there?

With highest regard, I am, dear Mrs. Peele,

Yours faithfully,

Garan Bourke.

Patience read this carefully-worded epistle twice, then laughed and shrugged her shoulders.

"I am glad he has declared himself," she thought. "Of course I should have ignored the past, but it is a relief to think that there will be no awkwardness."

X.

On Monday at two o'clock Tarbox came up to her cell to escort her down to the sheriff's office.

"Bourke's there, and I never saw him looking better," he said, rubbing his hands. "Oh, he'll pull you through. Don't you worry."

Patience was very nervous, but her years of self-repression and her experience at Peele Manor had forged a key with which she could at times lock nerve and muscle into subjection. As she entered the sheriff's office she smiled upon Mr. Bourke as graciously as any young and beautiful woman would be expected to smile upon a great lawyer enlisted in her service.

Bourke came forward with the same ballast, although the red was in his face.

"It was better for you to come down here," he said. "There could be no privacy in your cell, and we must have absolute privacy for these meetings. Of course you know that we are going to rehearse you. Mrs. Peele, this is my assistant, Mr. Lansing." He indicated a good-

looking well-dressed young fellow, with boyish blue eyes and a tilted nose. She liked him at once and gave him her hand. Mr. Simms had risen as she entered, and they had nodded distantly.

"Take this chair, Mrs. Peele," continued Bourke. "Yes. This is the first of many rehearsals. We shall keep them up until the trial. You will imagine yourself on the witness-stand. Mr. Simms, whom, fortunately, you don't like, is the district attorney, Lansing is the judge, I am the counsel for the defence. I shall make the direct examination, and then Mr. Simms will cross-examine you with all the subtlety, the venom, and the irritating minutiæ of a district attorney determined to make himself immortal. I think we have outlined with reasonable completeness all that will or can be asked you, so that you can hardly be taken off your guard: you must be prepared to give direct answers without suspicious promptness, and avoid saying anything that could be misconstrued."

"Must I go on the stand?" asked Patience, fearfully. "I thought one was not obliged to, and I shall be so nervous."

Bourke shook his head emphatically. "The judge might reiterate a hundred times to the jury that your failure to go on the witness stand should not be counted against you, and still it would count—more than anything. It is something a jury never overlooks. These rehearsals are to keep you from being nervous, as much as anything else."

"Do you believe I am innocent?" asked Patience, giving way to an uncontrollable impulse.

"I do—both personally and professionally."

Simms laughed. "Bourke is so enthusiastic," he said, "that if he had made up his professional mind that you were innocent, the personal would follow suit."

"No, but I do," said Bourke, laughing, and looking at Patience with eyes which for the moment were more kind than keen. "Now, here goes."

When the two hours' rehearsal was over she was very pale. "I did not know the case could look so black," she said.

"It is a black case," said Simms.

"Do you really take so much interest?" she asked Bourke, curiously. "You make me feel as if the issue were yours and not mine. Or is that only your professional pride?"

"Bourke is the most ambitious man at the New York bar," said Simms.

"And the most human," added Lansing.

Patience smiled at the young man and turned to Bourke, whose eyes were twinkling. "I take a very deep personal interest in your case," he said gallantly.

"Bourke is an Irishman," said Simms, with sarcasm.

"We'll excuse you," said Bourke. "You know you have business with Sturges," and Simms gathered up his papers and retired, followed by Lansing. As the door closed Bourke's face changed. He became serious at once.

"Mrs. Peele," he said, "it would be foolish and unkind to conceal from you the fact that you are in a very grave position. I have never known a more damaging chain of circumstantial evidence. The only jury we can possibly get together, the only men in Westchester County who will know nothing about the case, will be farmers and small tradespeople. These men are narrow-minded, unworldly, religious, bigoted people who will look with horror upon a woman accused of murder; who will be surlily prejudiced against you because you did not love your husband, and because you left him; and above all they are likely to think you should be executed if for no other reason than because," —He hesitated. The blood came into his face. "Tell me, is it true? I don't believe it. I can't believe it—"

"That I had a lover? No, I did not have a lover. If that spy reports exactly what he heard, he must himself prove that I did not. I liked—I do like—a man, a former editor of mine, immensely. At that time I believed myself in love with him; but I was as mistaken as I suppose all impulsive and mentally lonely people are once or oftener in their lifetimes. Although he visits me now we have come to a complete understanding. I shall not marry him."

Bourke looked at the floor for a moment. "Yes," he said finally. "Yes. That is a great point, of course. Well—as a rule I can do anything I like with a jury in Westchester County; I know and have known for

twenty years almost every man within forty miles; but we shall have to go out into the highways and byways for talesmen: your case has attracted almost universal attention. It is just possible, therefore, that the jury may convict you—Don't be frightened—Don't look like that—please!—If that happens I shall take the case to the General Term, and failing that, to the Court of Appeals. One way or another I shall get you off—I pledge you my life on that," he added vehemently. "Will you put your faith in me and keep up?"

"I am sure no woman could help it," said Patience, smiling graciously.

That night, somewhat to her amusement, she thought on Bourke with a certain sweet tremor until she fell asleep. She did not yet love him, but he satisfied her imagination; and he was the first man that ever had.

XI.

PATIENCE was rehearsed eight or ten times, Mr. Simms cross-examining by a different method upon each occasion, racking his brain for new points with which to confound her. She began to feel quite at ease on the witness-stand, and equal to the coming tilt with the district attorney. Aside from a natural nervousness she felt no fear of the approaching crisis, rather an

excited interest. The papers were booming her again, and she would have been less than American had she not appreciated her position as heroine of the most sensational drama of the day.

In the last week of February, however, she received information which induced her first misgiving: Miss Beale was down with pneumonia. That superlatively healthy person loved fresh air only less than she loved the Lord, and slept with her windows open in midwinter. Despite habit she invariably caught cold when travelling, as the one window of a small sleeping-room was likely to be at the head of her bed. She had defied Nature once too often.

When Patience told Mr. Bourke of Miss Beale's illness, the red streaked his face, as it had a habit of doing when he was disturbed. They were alone in the office.

"Will it make much difference?" she asked anxiously.

"Oh, no, I hope not; only she would have been a great card. She is known and respected throughout the county, and I should have dinned her in the ears of the jury. But you should have some woman with you. Is there no one else?"

Patience shook her head. "No one that would be of use. I have few women friends. Women don't like me much, I think. Mrs. Burr was my most intimate friend, but her husband naturally wanted to keep her out of the affair, and sent her off to Europe."

"It is odd. I cannot think of you as friendless. You attract and antagonise more strongly than anyone I ever saw."

He was staring hard at her, and she turned her head away, colouring slightly. It was the first time they had been alone since the initial rehearsal, although he and the other lawyers had often lingered, after business was over, to talk with her. Apparently she and he were the best of friends, and their former acquaintance had not been recognised by a glance.

"I wonder if we really are friends," he said abruptly, then shook his shoulders slightly, as if, having made the plunge, he would not retreat.

Patience beat her fingers lightly on the desk, but did not turn her face to him.

"Our relationship is very agreeable," she said coolly. "I am delighted that Mr. Simms, for instance, is not my counsel."

There was a moment's suggestive silence, and then he said: "I understand. I can be nothing but counsel to you until I apologise. I have not done so before because there is no excuse to offer. I can only explain: you had deceived and outwitted and made a fool of me, and I was furious. Moreover, I was horribly disappointed. I am perfectly well aware that all that is no excuse. I was bitterly ashamed afterwards, and far more furious with myself than I had been with you. I have never ceased to deplore it. We might at least have been friends—"

"Ah, you forgave me then?" asked Patience, looking at his flushed face with a smile. He had never looked more awkward nor more attractive.

"Oh, yes; my offence was so much worse, you see, I had to."

"Well," she said, giving him her hand gracefully, "we will forgive each other."

He accepted her hand promptly and evinced no disposition to relinquish it. "You are so cold, though," he said ruefully. "Your forgiveness is merely indifference. But of course," hastily, "you are absorbed in much weightier matters than friendship. I can imagine how insignificant all other episodes of your past must seem—"

"Oh, if it were not for you I might have been here before to-day, and in a much worse predicament. I doubt if I should have left him as soon as I did if it had not been for your unpleasant truths. I was drifting, and also drifting toward morbidity, where I might have been capable of anything. If I had really killed him and been arrested I should have said so, and even you could not have saved me."

"Oh, it would have been easier: I could have got you off on the plea of insanity. But am I really a link in the chain? I am egoistical—and interested—enough to be—pleased."

"Oh, yes," she said, laughing a little. "You have had a good deal more to do with forging some of the links than you imagine."

His hand was beginning to tremble, and she withdrew her own. He did not attempt to recapture it, and for a moment they regarded each other defensively. He had avoided the mistake of mistakes for thirty-six years, and the very flavour of romance about his experience with this woman made him wary. She had been mistaken twice and had ordered her imagination to sleep. Something within him pulled her, but none knew better than she the independent activity of sex. Still, like all women, fire was dear to her fingers. His eyes had a gleam in them which made her experience keenly the pleasurable sensation of danger.

"Did you know that night that I had forgotten our conversation in the tower?" he said, laughing uneasily. "Well, I will admit that I had, but I certainly remember the conversation in the elm-walk—every word of it. It was a singular conversation," he continued hurriedly. "I have not found her yet, by the way. What is love, anyhow? Something always seems to be lacking. I have wanted a good many women, but there were shallows somewhere."

Patience had taken a chair and was fanning herself slowly. She answered with a judicial air, as of one deciding some abstract point to which she had given exhaustive study: "The lack is spiritual emotion. People of strong natures who are really in love are shaken by a passion that for the time being demands no physical expression. It is only when it subsides, in fact, that the other manifests itself. On the other hand,

the unimpassioned, the physically meagre, are incapable of even imagining such an exaltation of emotion. It is the supreme convulsion of mystery. And it must be impossible to feel it more than once in a lifetime—for more than one person, I mean."

"Have you ever felt it?" he asked abruptly. He was sitting opposite her, his brows drawn together, regarding her intently. Her cool impersonality nonplussed him.

"No."

"Then how do you know?"

"From the organ. If one wants to read the riddle of human nature let him listen to the organ for ten minutes. It lashes the soul—the emotional nature—up to its utmost possibilities. One knows instinctively—that is, if one is given to reasoning at all; for instincts are dead letters without analysis—that only one other force can cause a mightier tumult, a greater exaltation. Those that do not reason mistake it for a desire to spread their wings and fly to the throne of grace."

Bourke set his lips and looked at the floor. "Of course you are right," he said. "A man would never know that until he had felt it. It takes a woman to divine it. Perhaps it is as well he doesn't know it—there is one disappointment the less in life if such moments never come to him; and I doubt if they come to many. Either the savage is too strong in most of us, or we never come within range of the responsive spark. I have held that if there is any meaning at all

in the progress of man out of barbarism it is that he shall become a brain with a refinement and intensity of passion which shall give happiness without disgust. But you go beyond me."

"Oh, we are both right," said Patience, rising. "We are much better off than our ancestors. I like so much to talk to you. When I am free you must come to see me often."

"I shall, indeed. How gracefully you fan yourself. I never saw anyone use the fan in exactly the same way."

"I learned how from the old Spanish women in Monterey. They hold the thumb outwards, you know. That makes all the difference in the world. *Au revoir.*"

XII.

THE trial began on the eighth of March. Patience slept ill the night before, and arose early. She looked forward to the day's ordeal with mingled nervousness and curiosity. Her faith in Bourke was complete, and her mind was of the order that craves experience. She could not divest herself of the idea that she was about to play the part of heroine in a great human drama. And assuredly there has been no such theatre as the court-room since the world began.

She dressed herself with extreme care, in a tailor frock and toque of black and white. The costume was becoming, but she shook her head at her reflection in the mirror: hers was not the type of beauty to appeal to the class of men in whose hands her life would be; rather they would resent its cold pride, its manifest of race and civilisation. She remembered her youthful satisfaction in the fact that "common men did not like her." Rosita or Honora would carry a jury by storm, but she was too subtle to appeal to men outside of her own social sphere. Tarbox liked her because she was game and dependent on him for comfort: it was doubtful if he thought her pretty. He came up at ten minutes to ten. He wore a new suit of clothes, and looked excited and impatient.

"There's a lot of swells come," he said without preliminary; "some from New York and some from the county. We've got 'em up in the gallery, and they look fine in their new spring clothes, I tell you. First time I ever seen swells in this court-house. I rather thought they didn't go in for that kind of thing."

"They go in for fads, and you can as easily tell where lightning will strike next as what will be the next fad to possess fashionable women. Where is Mr. Bourke?"

"Up in the court-room, I guess. Ready?"

A few moments later he led her up the stair at the back of the court-room. A crowd of men at the door parted to let her enter, staring at her with eager curios-

ity. As she walked down the room to her seat beside her counsel she was conscious of a deep level of men's faces below and a tier of high-bred faces and bright spring gowns in the gallery above. She felt as if she were being shot upon a battery of eyes, and an impulse to turn and run; she looked like a black and white effigy of pride.

The large handsome room was tinted a pale blue and stencilled about the mouldings. The Bench and panelling behind it, the desks and tables, were of black walnut. Four long windows on each side of the room revealed the naked trees of March and the cheerless landscape. On the right of Patience's chair was the empty jury-box, before her the Bench. In the space thus formed—flanked on the other side by the talesmen summoned for the trial and at the back by the audience —was a right-angle of long study tables, three or four round tables, and many chairs. Every chair was occupied. Writing-pads lay on the smaller tables. Patience recognised several of the reporters. By one of the long tables before the jury-box sat Bourke, Simms, and Lansing. The former whispered to her that many of the men within the rail were eminent lawyers who had come to hear the case tried.

The judge sat alone on the Bench: an old man with pink face and head and neck, a close band of silver hair at the base of his skull. His face was narrow, his upper lip long. On either side of his mouth was a deep rut. The nose was coarse and strong, the eyes

behind the spectacles humorous, severe, and a little sly. His silver chin-tuft was shaped like the queen of hearts.

Just below the Bench, beside one of the long tables, sat a man whom Patience did not notice at once, but to whom, as the judge called the court to order, she turned suddenly, conscious of a fixed gaze. He sat with one arm along the table, the other hand absently rolling a piece of paper. His narrowed eyes were regarding her with cold speculation. Patience shuddered. She knew that he was Sturges, the district attorney. Tarbox had told and retold the history of his jealousy of Bourke, and his registered vow to win one of the great legal battles of which they were occasionally chief combatants. And this was the greatest! The man's face was set. He looked like a fate.

The clerk called a name. A man shuffled into the jury-box. Sturges stood up and put the usual questions. He spoke with exaggerated courtesy. Occasionally he smiled: a mechanical smile, as if an invisible string connected each corner of his mouth with a manipulator at the back of his head. His voice was soothing and cultivated, his manner almost deferential to the humble man in the box. Patience followed every motion and word with fascinated attention. When he asked the talesman if he had "any conscientious scruples regarding capital punishment as practised in this State," she felt the touch of icy fingers and her feet slipping into an open grave. Bourke, who divined her sensations,

smiled encouragingly; and after she had heard the question some fifty times, she ceased to attach any personal meaning to it.

They were four days impannelling the jury. The first time Patience stood up to face an accepted juror she regarded the hairy and ill-kept farmer with such haughty and disdainful eyes that Bourke whispered hurriedly: "For God's sake don't look at them like that or they'll send you up out of spite. Remember that this class of people is always at war with its betters."

"I can't help it," said Patience. "It's humiliating to think of being at the mercy of men like that."

When the box was filled at last she regarded the occupants attentively. They were hard-featured men of middle age, with long, bare upper lip and compressed mouth. Their grey skin was furrowed with lines of care and hardship, their chin-whiskers grizzled and scant. Their eyebrows stood out over faded eyes in wrinkled sockets. But what excited Patience's wonder was the small size of the heads. She had never seen twelve heads so little. They were hardly an advance upon their hairy ancestors. Throughout the trial she furtively watched the twelve faces of those twelve meagre heads. Never once did their expression, stolid and set, change. At night they haunted her. She awoke in the morning with a violent start, seeing them for a moment in a row on the foot-board of her bed. She speculated, at times, upon the lives of those men, those pinched, grubbing lives, and felt for them a sort of terrified pity.

What a mere glimpse of the world she had had, after all, and what ugly strata it had! What was the matter with civilisation?

XIII.

On the fourth day the district attorney opened the case with an address to the jury which was a masterpiece of temperate statement and damning suggestion. He dwelt long upon the remarkable points of the case: the youth and beauty and intelligence and social position of the defendant, the distinguished family which had been plunged into sorrow and disgrace by her crime, the extraordinary interest the crime had excited throughout the civilised world. He then gave a running account, clear and straightforward and decisive, of what the prosecution would prove, and concluded with a cold, terse, but reiterated warning that the prisoner at the bar was entitled to no sympathy because of her sex and position; that he and the jury were there for one purpose only: to consider the facts of the case and to do their plain duty, utterly regardless of consequences to the individual. Every word was chosen and weighed, and told like the ring of a steel hammer on a steel plate.

Dr. Lewis was then called to prove the fact of Beverly Peele's death, and his vigorous story weighed

heavily in the scales against the defence. The moment the district attorney sat down Bourke was on his feet. For a moment he stood lifting and shaking the loose cloth of the table beside him; then asked one or two random questions which put the witness for the prosecution quite at his ease. In the course of a moment the witness began to writhe, and at the end of five minutes manifested his consciousness of the fact that he was a small country practitioner, to be regarded by any intelligent jury with contempt. Nevertheless, it was impossible to shake his testimony.

He was followed by the New York physician, a man of eminence, who had assisted at the death-bed, then by the coroner. The fact of young Peele's death being firmly established in the jury-box, a chemist was put upon the stand to testify that he had found morphine in the stomach of the deceased. He was worried and badgered and ridiculed and derided by Bourke, who temporarily infected everybody in the court-room with his scorn of the exercise of chemistry as applied to morphine in the stomach of a dead man, but held his ground, having been maltreated in a like manner many times before. Following, came a civil engineer, who described the grounds and general position of Peele Manor to the jury; and the testimony for the day was over.

The next morning the prosecution passed on to the motive. Honora was the first witness called. She wore a black frock and hat, and looked dignified and sad.

In her clear childlike voice she described to the jury her moment of confusion and horror when awakened from a profound sleep by the prisoner; told the mournful story of the unavailing attempts at resuscitation; and hesitatingly admitted, in full detail, the unmistakable indifference of the wife. To the latter testimony Mr. Bourke "objected," as he had done to similar testimony by the doctors, but the objection was overruled by the judge. She also admitted having seen from her window the defendant returning from town after her early visit on the morning of the "Eye" story, inappropriately attired in grey and pink, and having discovered the newspapers in confusion on the library floor before any other member of the household except the prisoner had arisen. She related Patience's previous complaint that her husband always waited until she was in her first heavy sleep before demanding the morphine, and her fear lest she should some night give him an overdose. The jury must have been small-headed indeed, to fail to understand the district attorney's insinuations regarding the prisoner's deep-laid scheme to avert suspicion.

As Honora gave her testimony Patience saw Mr. Bourke's eyes sparkle. She knew that some pregnant idea had flashed into that lightning-like brain. As the district attorney took his seat he rose slowly and smiled sociably at Honora. She bent her head slightly; she had always liked him.

"Miss Mairs," he said haltingly, his eyes wandering

to the judge, as if in search of inspiration, his hand flirting the loose cloth of the table, "you are sure that Mrs. Peele wore a grey gown to New York that morning?"

"Yes, sir."

"And the condition of the newspapers seemed to you to indicate great agitation of mind?"

"Yes, sir."

"Yes, yes. And she returned in an hour or two, you say?"

"Yes, sir."

"Miss Mairs!" he thundered, turning suddenly upon her and pointing a rigid finger straight at her startled face, "are you sure that you were asleep when Mrs. Peele awakened you on the night of Beverly Peele's death?"

Patience drew her breath sharply. She closed her eyes. Honora had not been asleep that night! The certainty came to her as suddenly and as positively as it had come to Bourke.

For the fraction of a moment Honora hesitated. Every man and woman in the court-room was breathless. Several had started to their feet.

"Quite sure," she replied finally, and that silver shallow voice did not falter.

"You are *sure* that you heard no one go to the lavatory that night, before Mrs. Peele spoke to you?" He hurled the words at her as the Great Judge might hurl the final sentence on Judgment Day.

"Sure."

"Was your door open that night?"

"I don't remember."

Patience leaned over and whispered to Lansing, who sprang forward and whispered to Bourke.

"The night was hot," continued Bourke. "Were you not in the habit of leaving your door open on hot nights?"

"Sometimes."

"Was it not always your custom?"

"Not always. When I thought of it I opened the door, but I frequently forgot it."

"Yes! Yes! You are quite sure you cannot remember whether or not it was open on that night?"

"I cannot remember."

"Do you remember any other nights on which Mrs. Peele went to the lavatory to drop the morphine?"

"Yes, sir; a great many."

"But of this all-important night you remember nothing?"

"No, sir."

"Yes! Mrs. Peele never was called upon to drop the morphine until after twelve o'clock. Were you in the habit of lying awake until late?"

"Yes."

"But on this night you went to sleep early?"

"Yes."

"You heard or saw—you are on your oath, remember—nothing whatever until Mrs. Peele called you?"

"Nothing."

"You can go.—She is lying," he whispered to Patience. "Damn her, I'll make her speak yet if I have to throttle it out of her."

Mr. Peele was the witness next called. He was treated with extreme diffidence by the district attorney, and even the judge gave him a fraternal smile. He told the story of the momentous night with parental indignation finally controlled, then, in spite of repeated "objections" and constant nagging, the significant tale of wifely indifference and desertion, and read to the jury "that cruel letter written to a dying man" the day before the defendant returned to nurse her husband. He repeated with the dramatic effect of the legal actor those dark insinuations of the prisoner: "You had better let me go! I feel that I shall kill him if I stay!" And later in the town house when she had struck her husband in the face: "You had better keep him out of my way. Do you know that once I tried to kill my own mother?"

He told of her eager interest in untraceable poisons one night when the subject of murder had come up at the dinner-table, her cold-blooded analysis of human motives.

Then he passed on to the painfully significant history of the day before the death: her demand for a divorce; her fury at her husband's refusal; her acknowledgment that she had quarrelled violently with the

deceased a short time before calling the family to his death-bed.

As he spoke Patience's blood congealed. The woman he depicted was enough to inspire any jury with horror. It was herself and not herself, a Galatea manufactured by a clever lawyer.

But it was Mr. Bourke's privilege to give the Galatea a soul. Despite the older man's greater legal experience, his superior wariness and subtlety, he was forced to admit that his son was a fool; that his son's wife was a woman of brilliant intellect driven to desperation at being tied down to a fool; that so long as she had lived with him she had done her duty; that when she had returned as his nurse she had fulfilled her part of the contract to the letter; that never had she given her husband cause for real jealousy; that the witness himself had made a companion of her, and that he had been bitterly disappointed in his son.

The terrible facts could not be stricken out, but Mr. Peele, nevertheless, was made to pass the most uncomfortable hours of his life. "And in spite of these threats," exclaimed Bourke, with the accentuation of one addressing an idiot at large, "in spite of the precision with which you remembered them, you permitted your family to implore her to return and become your son's nurse; you permitted her to sleep in a room communicating with his, where, in a fit of passion—if she is the woman you profess to believe her to be—she could have murdered him in the dead of night with a

carving knife or a hatchet, before anyone—even the lightly sleeping Miss Mairs—could have flown to the rescue; you permitted her—" he turned suddenly and faced the jury, then wheeled about and regarded Mr. Peele with scornful inquiry—"you permitted her to drop morphine for your son, and to have unrestrained access to the drug, knowing that he in his agony would swallow whatever she gave him without question. Will you kindly explain to the jury whether this mode of proceeding was ingenuousness on your part, or criminal connivance?"

Mr. Peele's under lip pressed the upper almost to the septum of his nose. His eyes half closed and glittered unpleasantly; but he controlled himself and answered,—

"I paid no attention to her threats at the time."

"Ah! You did not believe in them? You admit that?"

"I classed them with the usual hysterical ravings of women. That was my error."

"State, if you please, your specific reasons for your change of mind. You will hardly, as a lawyer, claim to have been converted to the defendant's capacity for crime by the mere fact that your son died of an overdose of morphine?"

And throughout the long day Mr. Bourke hectored him, fighting him, point by point, smashing to bits his testimony relative to the events of the day preceding the death, evidence to which he was not an eye-witness,

which he had received at second hand from his wife and son. The "cruel letter written to a dying man" was disposed of in a similar manner.

"You believed your son to be in a precarious condition when you counselled them to send for your son's wife?"

"I did."

"But you believed with the doctors that if she returned, thereby bringing him peace of mind as well as tender care, he had excellent chances for life?"

"I did."

"And Mrs. Burr was instructed to present that phase of the question to the defendant, with all the force of which she was capable?"

"Yes."

"And the defendant so understood it?"

"I suppose she did."

"And yet you assert that this purely businesslike letter, written by a self-respecting woman, was addressed to a dying man, while at the same time you assert that this man could be cured by the gratification of a whim, and that you had taken particular pains to make the defendant aware of the fact!"

When Mr. Peele finally left the stand, he looked battered and limp.

that simple word. "You never felt yourself a cowardly scoundrel meddling in what was none of your business —No! No!" He turned to the jury with the passion still upon his face, but when he took his seat he smiled encouragingly to his admiring young client.

"Wouldn't he make an actor?" whispered Simms. "I never saw him do the lofty indignation act with finer effect."

"Well, he would be a great actor, at least," retorted Patience, "and I am convinced that you would be a very small one."

"Just wait," said Simms, angrily. "I've got to talk to this jury about you in a day or two, and if you don't forget I ever doubted you I'll eat my hat. The best lawyer's the best fakir, and a few days from now you'll see what an ambitious man I am."

"Miss Rosita Thrailkill," called the district attorney when the court opened next morning. The audience stood up to a man.

A plump willowy Spanish figure undulated behind the jury-box, kissed the Bible reverently, and ascended the witness-stand. Rosita was clad in black and yellow, a mantilla in place of a hat, and many diamonds. She looked as pretty and as naughty as possible. As she met Patience's eyes, she wafted her a kiss, and the prisoner groaned in spirit. She gave her name and birthplace with melodious caressing accent and her marked precision of speech. Yes, the defendant had been her dear friend, her best friend, her only intimate

friend. Yes, with unaffected reluctance, Mrs. Sparhawk had been disreputable, and Patience had once attempted her life. Yes, she was the prima donna of light opera known as La Rosita. Did she appear before the public in tights and scant attire? Yes, why not? Had she not had a number of lovers? Objected to and sustained. Flashing indignation of soft Spanish eyes. Did she not have the reputation of being a woman of loose and lawless life? Objected to and sustained. Angry rattle of fan. Was it not in her house that the prisoner was arrested? Yes, it was! and she loved her Patita and would always give her shelter.

When the district attorney sat down with an ugly smile on his thin mouth, Bourke, muttering anathema, rose to his feet.

"Was there ever a whisper against your reputation when you were a schoolgirl in Monterey and most intimate with the prisoner?"

"No, *señor!*" cried Rosita, paying no attention to the objection. "I was a child, and could not even endure boys."

"How many times have you seen the defendant since you left Monterey?"

Rosita cast up her eyes, then tapped the sticks of her fan successively as she spoke.

"Once she came to see me just after—ah—WCTU died; then once just before she left Mr. Peele; then that day the 'Eye' came out and said she had done this so horrible thing. *Ay, dios!*"

"She has called upon you three times only, then, since you were children in Monterey, since you have been the Rosita of the public; in the last five years, in short?"

"*Si, señor*—yes, sir."

"How long did she remain upon her first visit?"

"Oh, only a little while. I told her something that shocked her, for she was always so proper."

"What did you tell her?"

"Objected to," cried the district attorney.

"Objection sustained," snapped the judge.

"How long did she remain on her second visit?"

"About a half-hour. I never knew what she came at all for. She just floated in and out." Rosita waved her arm with enchanting grace.

"Did she tell you why she came the third time?"

"Because she had no other place to go to. She said no hotel would take her in."

"She said that her old landlady had refused to admit her, did she not?"

"*Si, señor.*"

"Yes, yes!—and that in her terrible extremity she naturally turned to the friend of her childhood?"

"*Si!*" and Rosita wept.

"But that she should not have gone to your house if there had been any possibility of obtaining entrance to a hotel, or if she had not been turned out of her father-in-law's house?"

"*Ay, yi!* yes."

"That is all. You can go."

During the rest of that day and the two following days the experts for the prosecution had the stand. The innumerable questions asked by the district attorney, the technical details of the cross-examinations, the constant interruptions, and the minutiæ of the evidence emptied the court room after the first hour, and even Patience became bored, and fell to thinking of other things, not forgetting to pity those twelve puzzled little heads in the jury box.

The gist of the evidence was that there was enough morphine in Beverly Peele's stomach to kill two men.

XV.

"OUR turn has come," said Lansing to Patience on the morning after the expert testimony was concluded. "We are confident of success now."

"But the facts are hideous, and they have painted me black."

"Mr. Bourke scraped off a good deal, and he'll have the rest off before he gets through. If he could only make that lying woman open her mouth! You've borne yourself splendidly. Keep in good condition for the witness-stand. Are you frightened?"

"No," she said, smiling at Bourke gratefully. "Not a bit."

Simms opened the case for the defence.

He had a harsh strident voice. He gesticulated as if practising for a prize-fight, doubling back and springing forward. He cleared his throat with vicious emphasis and rasped his heels upon the floor. His statements were dry and matter-of-fact, his language bald; but he made a direct, vigorous and enthusiastic speech. The jury was informed that it was there to save the life of one of the most brilliant and high-minded young women of the age,—a woman utterly incapable of murder or of any violent act, a woman with the mild and meditative mind of the student. That it would be proved not only that she was far too clever to take life by such clumsy methods, but that she had no object, as she had gained her liberty, and the lover was a myth. The whole prosecution was a malignant and personal prosecution of an innocent but too gifted woman by an absurdly conceited family that had resented her superior intelligence. This and much more of fact and fancy. But Patience, with perverse femininity, liked him none the better, and would not even look at him when he sat down.

Mr. Field was the first witness for the defence. Although compelled under cross-examination to admit the prisoner's interest in subtle poisons, he managed to convey to the jury that it was merely the result of an unusually brilliant and inquiring mind, a thought born of the moment, of his suggestion. He gave the highest

tribute to her cleverness, her work on his paper, and to her reputation.

Latimer Burr was called next, and spoke with enthusiasm of her "unfailing submission to a man of abominable and savage temper until submission ceased to be a virtue." He had never heard her utter any threats to kill. Yes, it was true that he had engaged counsel for defence. He believed in her thoroughly.

Miss Merrien, her landlady, and Mrs. Blair were put on the stand next morning, and the good character they gave Patience was unshaken by the nagging of the district attorney. Mr. Tarbox testified to her demeanour of innocence during her imprisonment.

"But the defence is weak all the same," whispered Patience to Lansing. "Not a word can be said in rebuttal. Only Mr. Bourke's eloquence can save me."

"Good character goes a long way," replied Lansing. "You have no idea of its weight with a jury, particularly with a jury of this kind."

Patience was put on the witness-stand next. The supreme effort to overcome nervousness gave her an icy and repellent demeanour. Never had she held her back as erect, her head as high. She kept her eyelids half lowered, and spoke with scarcely any change of inflection. She told the story of the night as she had told it in rehearsal many times. There had been a quarrel an hour before she heard the deceased get up and go to the lavatory. She offered to drop his morphine, and he replied with an oath that she should never do an-

other thing for him as long as he lived, that he hoped she would leave the house by the first train next morning. His sudden silence upon his return to his bed excited her apprehension, and she called the family.

When Bourke sat down and the district attorney arose and confronted her she shivered suddenly. Bourke's rich, strong voice and kind, magnetic gaze had given her courage, but this man with his eyes like grey ice, his mechanical smile, and cold, smooth voice conjured up a sudden awful picture of the execution, room at Sing Sing. Her insight appreciated with exactitude the pitiless ambition of the man, knew that he stood pledged to his future to send her to her death. He made her admit all the damning facts of the evidence against her, the facts which stood out like phosphorescent letters on a black wall, and to acknowledge her abhorrence of the man that had been her husband. But all this had been anticipated: at least he could not confuse her.

Again two days and a part of a third were monopolised by experts. These two illustrious chemists testified, through the same bewildering mass of detail as that employed by their equally illustrious predecessors, that there was not enough morphine in Beverly Peele's stomach to kill a cat.

There was a short interval, after the second expert had been permitted to leave the stand, during which Bourke and Simms and Lansing conferred together, preparatory to the summing up of the former. As Bourke was about to rise, the district attorney stood up, cleared

his throat, and said: "One moment, please. Will Miss Honora Mairs kindly take the stand?"

Bourke was on the alert in an instant. "The case for the prosecution has closed," he said.

"This is by special permission of the Court," replied the district attorney, coldly.

As Honora ascended the stand there was a deep murmur of admiration. She looked like an angel, nothing less. She wore a white lawn frock, girt with a blue sash; a large white leghorn lined with azure velvet, against which the baby gold of her hair shone softly. Her great blue eyes had the clear calm serenity of a young child. Patience drew her breath in a series of short gasps. Bourke sat with clenched hands.

"We understand," said the district attorney, severely, "that you did not tell all you knew the other day, and that you have signified your willingness to now tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Is this true?"

Honora bowed her head with an expression of deep humility, as a child might that had been justly rebuked.

"You had not slept at all upon that fatal night?"

"No."

"Your door was open?"

"Yes."

"You did see somebody enter the lavatory?"

"Yes."

"Whom did you see?"

There was a moment's breathless silence, during

which Patience wondered if a clock had ever ticked so loudly, or if the sun had ever shone with so vicious a glare.

"Whom did you see?" repeated the district attorney.

"The prisoner."

"What did she do?"

"She dropped some thirty or forty drops of morphine, I should say, then half filled the glass with water, as usual."

"You did not see the deceased go to the lavatory that night."

"No."

"Nor anyone else until the defendant called you?"

"No."

"That is all."

Mr. Bourke sprang to his feet, his nostrils dilating, his fine face quivering with unassumed scorn and indignation.

"You admit that you perjured yourself the other day?"

"I could not make up my mind to—"

"Never mind what you had not made up your mind to do. You admit that you perjured yourself?"

"Yes," gently.

"That in other words you lied."

"Yes, sir." Her voice was like the quiver of a violin.

"What proof are we to have that you are not lying now?"

"I am not lying. My conscience gave me no rest."

"It will give you more, I suppose, if you will have succeeded in swearing away the life of an innocent woman. Yes, yes!—Exactly how long did Mrs. Peele remain in the lavatory?"

"I cannot remember. Five or ten minutes."

"State the exact time."

"Perhaps five."

"And a few moments later when she ran into your room you pretended to be asleep: Why did you assume sleep; what reason had you for lying at that time?"

"I had dropped off."

"You had been sufficiently wide awake five minutes before to note precisely all these other things, and then had promptly fallen into a sound sleep. Is that your usual habit?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you speak to the prisoner when she came into the lavatory?"

"No."

"Were not you in the habit of holding a conversation with her upon such occasions?"

"Yes, sir."

"Why did you not address her on that night?"

"I was very sleepy, and had nothing in particular to say."

"But you were not too sleepy to note carefully all the details in the evidence you have just given. You can go,—and to the devil," he muttered. He thrust his

hands into his pockets and wheeled about, looking at Patience with such intensity of gaze that she moved suddenly forward. Her face was pale, but her eyes blazed with rage. Bourke glanced at the clock.

"It is twenty minutes to one," he said. "I would ask your honour to adjourn until two. I must have time to digest this new testimony. Its remarkable glibness prevented me from giving it the running deliberation that it demanded."

The judge sulkily dismissed the court. As Patience passed out of the room with Tarbox she heard the word "angel" more than once, and knew that it did not refer to her.

Patience was not conscious of fear as she ate her luncheon. Her heart was black with rage. "I'd willingly murder *her,*" she thought, "and my conscience wouldn't trouble me the least little bit."

XVI.

IMMEDIATELY after recess Mr. Bourke began his summing up. He commenced quietly, shaking the loose cloth of the table in an absent manner. His language was colloquial as he spoke to the jury of its grave responsibilities, and complimented it upon the "unusual intelligence which it had so far made evident." He passed naturally to the subject in hand, and dwelt elo-

quently upon the character of the defendant, of her lonely, pathetic youth, her high ideals, her remarkable intelligence, her ignorance of the world which had led her to fall in love with the first handsome and attractive man that had addressed her.

His voice rose to tragic pitch as he dwelt upon the terrible awakening of such a woman, bound for life to such a man,—a sensual, ill-tempered, selfish brute, who was a disgrace to the nineteenth century.

He depicted two years of uncomplaining wifely devotion (until Patience became lost in admiration of the defendant), the husband's frantic rages about nothing, his unrecognition of her superiority, his ignorant determination to make her his slave—his plaything—she, a woman whom such men as James E. Field and Gardiner Peele delighted to honour.

Then he dropped again into pathos (which never for a moment degenerated into bathos) and described the desolate life of such a woman in an empty, frivolous, brainless society (faint murmur and indignant rustle in the gallery), a society of idle people with neither soul nor intelligence, but who squandered the money wrested from the People, the great People, of whom the Gentlemen of the Jury were twelve worthy and doubtless long suffering members.

It was not until he had emphasised and recapitulated with every resource of his splendid vocabulary, every modulation of his glorious voice, by controlled and telling gesture, by sudden tremendous bursts of indignation,

the married life of the prisoner, that he passed to the day and night of the tragedy. He began with the morning, and dwelt upon every detail of the day. Before he reached midnight he had Beverly Peele in a frame of mind for both suicide and murder. He sent him to bed with black skin and white flecked nose and chaos in his heart. With a magnificent burst of scorn he quoted his shameful language when his wife had offered to get him the morphine, the oaths he had used to a "refined and elegant and patient woman." Then he took him to the lavatory, showed him jerking the stopper from the morphine bottle, and recklessly pouring a fourth of its contents into a glass. "He knew that he had to die anyhow, and he could at least die happy in a hideous revenge." In brief and vivid phrase he cited several similar instances in legal history.

Then he returned to Peele Manor and denounced the jealous woman who for five years had nursed fury in her heart, and who, on the witness-stand, here, Gentlemen of the Jury, conceived, at the unfortunate suggestion of the speaker, the frightful revenge upon a woman who had treated her with unvarying kindness. She did not speak at once, partly because her lying tale needed rehearsing, partly because she believed that the case for the prosecution would win without her. But when she saw that the case for the prosecution was wholly lost she arrayed herself like an angel, that she might the better impose upon the unworldly Gentlemen of the Jury, and swore away a woman's life.

The several assertions on the defendant's part that she felt disposition to murder he tore to rags and flung in the face of the jury. Had not every high-tempered person — could not the Gentlemen of the Jury recall having exclaimed in bitter moments: "I wish you were dead! I could kill you!" With deep regret and remorse he would confess that he had used similar expressions many times.

Then with consummate skill he dilated upon the impossibility of so clever a woman as the defendant doing aught so stupid as to murder in the manner of the accusation. When there was nothing left to say on this subject he expatiated upon the lack of motive with a technical and personal brilliancy which made even the cross-grained old judge lean forward with a cynical smile.

The interviews, even the final ones, with the mysterious stranger, he treated with contempt, although the contempt was sufficiently long drawn out to impress the jury with every most insignificant detail. It was the mere longing for companionship of a lonely woman: that was the beginning and the end of it. The lover, the intention of either to marry, he disposed of with a vehemence which made Simms twist about suddenly and look at Lansing; but the young man was regarding his chief with rapt admiration.

Not so much as the scraping of a boot-heel was heard in the court-room. Patience glanced at the district attorney. His face was set and sullen.

After every possible point had been considered Bourke concluded with an appeal so stirring, so ringing, so thrilling that every person in the court-room except the district attorney sat forward and held his breath. No such burst of passion had ever been heard in that room before. Patience covered her face with her hands. Her heart beat suffocatingly. The blood pounded in her ears; but not one note of that wonderful voice, not one phrase of fire, escaped her.

Is there any possible condition in which a man can appear to such supreme advantage as when pleading for the life of a fellow being, more particularly of a young and beautiful woman? How paltry all the time-worn rescues of woman from sinking ship and runaway horse and burning house! A great criminal lawyer standing before the jury-box with a life in his hand has the unique opportunity to display all the best gifts ever bestowed upon man: genius, brain, passion, heart, soul, eloquence, a figure instinct with grace and virility, a face blazing with determination to snatch a man or woman from the most awful of dooms.

And all in two short hours.

If those in the court-room for whom the case had no personal interest were at Bourke's feet, hanging upon his words, adoring him for the moment, what were the feelings of the woman for whom he was making so desperate and manly a fight? She forgot her danger, forgot everything but the man, the reckless joy of loving, of being swept out of her calm orbit at last. Her analytical

brain was dulled, her arms ached, her heart shook her body.

As Bourke made a few supplementary remarks calculated to take the wind out of the district attorney's sails,—references to the young man's ambition, his youthful eagerness to become famous, what the winning of such a great case would mean to him, and to his remarkable cleverness and skill with a jury,—Patience heard Simms say to Lansing: "My God! Bourke has surpassed even himself. Even he never got as high as that before."

"He's the greatest man in the country, God bless him!" said Lansing.

As Bourke finally dropped upon his chair he turned to Patience. Their eyes met and lingered; and in that moment each passed into the other's keeping.

XVII.

STURGES lost no time taking his stand before the jury-box. It was the hour of his life, but he was not nervous. His long, thin figure leaning toward the box as he rested his finger-tips on the table, showed as fine a repose of nerve as of brain. His clear-cut face with the cruel mouth and pleasant smile was calm and unclouded.

He began by defending himself against Mr. Bourke's

remarks, and asserted with convincing emphasis that when he had taken the oath of office he had left his personal ambition behind him with his personal interests, and had given himself body and soul and brain to the People of Westchester County. Then he made an equally earnest statement of the grave responsibilities of a district attorney, his solemn duty to the People, the necessity to smother all promptings of humanity that he might do what was best for the People—"The greatest good of the greatest number."

Then he painted Patience as black as Bourke had enamelled her white. With masterly ingenuity he made each juror feel what an awful being a bad woman was, an unloving, undutiful wife; what a curse each man of them would writhe under had Fate played him as scurvy a trick as it had played poor Beverly Peele; that no unloved husband's life would be safe were not such women exploited and punished, that if the Gentlemen of the Jury were weak enough to consider her sex they might be imperilling the lives of countless thousands. For the matter of that, he reiterated, crime had no sex.

He took up each detail of the story, and in the light of his interpretation Patience was the modern Lucretia Borgia and Beverly Peele an injured, peaceable, affectionate husband, who had been sacrificed by an abandoned woman to whom he had given his honoured name, his fortune, and his love.

He scarcely raised his voice. There was no passion

in his utterance; but he manufactured a mosaic, bit by bit, each fragment fitting so exactly that the design was without crevice or crack. He demonstrated mathematically that the tardy evidence of Miss Mairs had been superfluous; that the chain of circumstantial evidence was symmetrical and complete, and that no possible motive beyond duty to her conscience could be attributed to her. With devilish adroitness, without a direct phrase, he managed to filter into those twelve small brains the secret of the inspired eloquence of the eminent counsel for the defence,—in behalf of his young and beautiful client.

While he was talking, the skeleton trees beyond the windows grew dim of outline, the mass of colour in the gallery faded. An official came out of the library behind the court-room and lit the tall gas-lamps on either side of the bench. The judge looked like a bas-relief in pink and silver against the dark panelling of the background. The rest of the room was in shadow. The light of the near jet fell full upon Sturges' stern face.

Patience's life from "its fiendish childhood" was rehearsed with such consecutive logic that crime at some point of such a woman's career was inevitable. The only wonder was that it had not been committed sooner. The threats, he demonstrated, whether uttered in moments of passion or not, were the significant output of a brooding mind. The "cruel letter to a dying man" was read with slow and indignant emphasis. Then the events of the fatal day and night, the quarrels, the

prisoner's fury at being denied a divorce, the deceased's threat to live twenty years to spite her, her carefully rehearsed and absurd story that her husband had dropped the morphine himself,—something he knew himself physically incapable of doing,—the equal absurdity of his suicide when a greater revenge lay in his hands, her brutal indifference while he lay dying, were deliberately gone over with passionless and insidious effect. The quiet half-lit room was oddly in keeping with the deadly methods of the man.

When he had made the most of her flight on the morning of the "Eye" story, he paused a moment, during which the rising wind could be heard in the trees. Within, there was no sound. No one seemed breathing. Bourke and Patience were in deep shadow. With an instinct of protection he clasped his hand suddenly about hers.

Sturges resumed, with lowered and vibrating voice:

"And—where—Gentlemen of the Jury,—was—this woman—arrested?——*In the house of a harlot!*" He paused another half moment. "In the house of her oldest friend, La Rosita, one of the most abandoned women in America."

Bourke's hand twitched spasmodically. Simms twisted his neck, and shot at Lansing an uneasy glance. Patience shuddered. For the moment she forgot Bourke. She felt as if a cobra were folding her about,—very slowly, and gently, and inexorably.

When Sturges sat down the jury was told to rise.

The judge stood under one of the lamps and read them his charge. He explained that unless they could find the prisoner guilty of murder in the first degree—of deliberate premeditated murder—they must acquit her. As the final quarrel had taken place an hour before the killing it was obviously impossible that she could have dropped the morphine in a moment of excitement; and a verdict of self-defence would be equally absurd. He also charged them that they were to consider the law in the case and nothing but the law,—that human sympathy must have no place in their verdict.

Bourke was too able a lawyer not to have the last word. As the judge sat down, he arose with several sheets of manuscript, and for twenty minutes asked the judge to charge the jury so and so, practically recapitulating all the strong points of the defence. The judge answered mechanically, "I so charge," and at last the patient jury was conducted out of the court-room and locked up. Bourke was surrounded at once.

As Tarbox, with Patience on his arm, left the court-house and its crowd behind him, he exclaimed, "By God, that was a great speech of Bourke's! There never has been a summing up like that in my time before, not even by him. But he's the smartest man in Westchester County! Hanged if I don't think he's the smartest man in the State of New York. He'll be in the United States Senate yet."

XVIII.

AFTER dinner Patience went back to the court-room to remain until ten o'clock, at which time the jury, if it had not come to a decision, would be locked up for the night. She sat surrounded by her counsel and the lawyers that had taken so deep an interest in the case. Bourke sat very close to her, and once or twice as she met his eyes she forgot the terrible moment to come. Few people were in the court-house. No one expected a verdict that night.

It was exactly at half-past nine that the jury filed solemnly in. Patience's knees jerked suddenly upward. She lost her breath for a moment. Bourke leaned over her and took her hand, regardless of the curious people surrounding them.

"Be brave. Be brave," he said hurriedly. "Now is the time for all your pride and disdain."

When she was ordered to stand up and face the jury, she did so with an air so collected and so haughty that even Simms murmured: "By Jove, she is a thorough-bred."

There was a moment of horrible and vibrating silence, during which Patience's brain reiterated hilariously: "Twelve little Jurymen all in a row. Twelve little heads all in a row." Then the foreman was asked for

the verdict. He cleared his throat, and without moving a muscle of his face, remarked,—

"Guilty."

The district attorney sat down suddenly and hid his face with a conclusive hand. Patience resumed her seat with a mien as stolid as that of the twelve jurors. Bourke's face blanched, but he sprang to his feet and demanded that the jury be polled. Each solemn "Yes," twelve and unhesitating, sounded like a knell. Then Bourke demanded a Stay, which was granted by the impassive judge, and Patience was led through the silent crowd from the court-room to her cell. Tarbox escorted her mutely, his face turned away. At the door of her cell he attempted to speak, but gave it up and retreated hastily.

Patience threw off her hat and sat down on the edge of the bed. The verdict, she knew now, had not been a surprise. But she thought little of the verdict. She was waiting for something else. It came in a moment. She heard a quick, impatient step on the ground below, then a rapid ascent of stair, a word or two at the door, Tarbox's retreating step.

Bourke was in the cell. His face was white, but that of Patience as she rose and confronted him was not.

"I don't care!" she said. "I don't care! I believe I am happier than any woman alive."

The red sprang to his face. He took her outstretched hands and held them to lips and eyes for a

moment, then caught her in his arms and kissed her until the rest of the world lay dull, and all life was in that quiet cell.

XIX.

A YEAR later they took her to Sing Sing. The General Term had refused her a new trial, the Court of Appeals had sustained the lower court. Bourke had won nothing but additional glory.

He did not go with her to Sing Sing. She saw him alone for an hour before Tarbox came to take her away. Her composure was greater than his. He was torn with horror and defeat, and his surpassing love for the woman. Not that he had given up hope by any means, nor the fight; but he knew the fearful odds, and he cursed the law which he had outwitted and played with so often and so brilliantly.

"I wish we were back in the middle ages," he said savagely, "when a man took his rights and regulated justice by brute force. We are not half men now that we are under the yoke of a thing that operates blindly, and strikes by chance where it should strike, in nine cases out of ten. Good God! Good God! it seems incredible that I can *let* you go, that I shall stand by and see Tarbox lead you away. Think of the combined intellect of the world and the centuries having done no more for man than that. I must stand aside

and see you go to a hideous cell in the Death House—O my God!"

He had awakened the woman down to the depths; to-day he called to life the maternal instinct in her. She put her arms about him with the passionate strength of one who would transmit courage and hope through physical pressure.

"Listen," she said; "I don't mind one cell more than another—and I know, I *know,* that you will save me. I feel it. I am not going to die. You are a man of genius. Everybody says that—everybody—I know that you will have an inspiration at the last minute. And I have been happy, happy, happy! Don't forget that—not ever. I would go through twenty times what I have suffered in all my life for this past year. Don't you think I can live on that for a month or two? Why, I can feel your touch, the pressure of your arms for hours after you leave me. I shall be with you every minute—"

He threw back his head, shaking it with a brief violent motion characteristic of him.

"Very well," he said, "very well; it is not for me to be weak when you are strong. Perhaps it is because the prize is so great that the fight is so long and desperate. Oh, you wonderful woman!

"Tell me," he said after a moment, "that it has all been as perfect to you as to me. I want to hear you say that, but I know it, I know it."

"Oh,—I—I—"

Tarbox came and took her away. He looked as if he had lost home and friends and fortune, and did not speak from White Plains to Sing Sing. The details of the trip interested her less than such details are supposed to interest the condemned that look their last on sky and land; her head ached, and the glare of the Hudson blinded her; but as the train neared Sing Sing she opened her eyes suddenly, then sat forward with a note of admiration.

The river was covered with a dense rosy mist which half obscured the opposite shore, giving it the effect of an irregular group of islands. Above was a calm lake of yellow fire surrounded by heavy billows of boiling gold; beyond, storm-clouds, growing larger and darker.

As they drove, a few moments later, to the prison, the great, grey, battlemented pile was swimming in the same rosy glow. Patience murmured satirically:

"'The splendour falls on castle walls.'"

Tarbox looked at her in amazement. "Oh," he said, "how do you manage it?"

"All hope is not gone," she replied; "there is still the governor." But she knew how slender that hope was. The governor was on the eve of re-election; public feeling was multiplied against her; the "Eye" was clamouring for her life, and strutting like a turkey-cock; the "Eye" and Tammany Hall were one; the governor was the creature of Tammany Hall.

The warden was in his office. He greeted her with elaborate politeness, albeit puffed with alcohol and pride. She handed him what valuables she had not presented to Tarbox, and answered his questions in a manner not calculated to placate his Irish dignity. Then she turned to say good-bye to Tarbox, but he had disappeared. The head-keeper, a big kindly man, who pressed her arm in a paternal manner, led her down long, echoing corridors, past rows and tiers of cells, and yards full of Things in striped garments, and talked to her in the manner one adopts to a frightened child, until she said:—

"I am not going to have hysterics; nor am I at all sure that I am to be executed—but please don't imagine that I don't appreciate your kindness."

"Well, I like that," he said. "To tell the truth, the prospect of having a woman here has half scared me out of my wits. But if you won't take on, I'll do everything I can to make you comfortable. We've put a woman servant in there to wait on you. I hope myself it won't be for long. The evidence is pretty black, but some of us has our opinion all the same."

"Must I go into the Death House? I think I shouldn't mind it so much if they'd put me anywhere else."

"I'm afraid you must, ma'am. That's the custom in these parts." He opened a door with a huge key, and Patience did not need to be told that she was in the famous Death House.

A long corridor with a high window at either end; on one side a row of cells separated from the main corridor by an iron fence sufficiently removed from the cells to make space for a narrow promenade. Where the middle cell should have been was a dark arched stone passage terminated by a stout oaken door. Patience knew that it led to the execution room. Two guards walked up and down the corridor. At the end, a sullen-looking woman stood over a stove, making tea.

"You've got the house all to yourself," said the keeper, with an attempt at jocularity. "If there'd been any men here I guess you'd have been sent to Dannemora, but it's always Sing Sing for the swells, when it's possible, you know."

He opened the gate of the iron fence and led her down to the cell at the extreme end. It was large and well lighted, but very different from the cell at White Plains.

"Are you going to lock me in?" she asked.

"Yes, ma'am, I must. If everything ain't comfortable, just let me know."

The key grated in the lock. The head-keeper with an encouraging smile walked away. Patience crouched in a corner, for the first time fully realising the awfulness of her position, her imagination leaping to the room beyond the passage. What did it look like, that horrible chair? How long—how long—the hideously practical details of electric execution—the awful mystery

of it—the new death to which imagination had not yet become accustomed—

There was no sound but the monotonous pacing of the death watch. The world beyond those stone walls might have sprung away into space, leaving the great beautiful prison alone on a whirling fragment.

She sprang to her feet and clenched her hands. "I'll not go mad and make an everlasting fool of myself," she thought. "If I have to die, I'll die with my head up and my eyes dry. If I have the blood of the aristocrat in me I'll prove it then, not die like a flabby woman of the people. The people! O God, how I hate the people!"

XX.

A GREAT petition was sent to the governor. It was signed uniformly by men and women of the upper class.

It is not the aristocrats that do the electing in the United States. The lower classes were against her to a man. Her personality enraged them; her unreligion, her disdainful bearing, her intellect, her position, antagonised the superstitious and ambitious masses more than her crime. Inevitable result: the governor refused to pardon.

Honora returned to Peele Manor from town in April.

Bourke's attempts to see her were frustrated by a body-guard of servants. He took up his residence in the little village adjoining the grounds. He hardly knew what he hoped. But Honora Mairs was the last and only resource, and he could not keep away from her vicinity. He did not go to Sing Sing. It had been agreed between himself and Patience that he should stay away: they had no desire to communicate through iron bars.

The execution was set for the seventh of May. On the evening of the sixth, while walking down the single street of the village Bourke came face to face with the new priest of the district.

"Tim Connor!" he exclaimed, forgetting for the moment, in the sudden retrospect which this man's face unrolled, the horror that held him.

"Well, it's me, sure enough, Garan, and I've been hunting for you these two days. I heard you were here, but faith, I've been busy!—not to say I've been away for two weeks."

"How long have you been here?"

"Six months, come June, it is since I left old Ireland; and I'm wanting to tell you that the creek we used to wade in is as tempting to the boys as ever, and that the bog you pulled me out of has moved on a mile and more. Twenty times I've been for going across the country to call on you and have a good grip of the hand, and to bless you again for letting me live to do good work; but I was caught in a net here—But

what's the matter—Are you ill?—Oh, sure! sure! This terrible business! I remember! Poor young thing!"

He laid his arm about the shoulders of the other man and guided him to his house. There, in his bare little study, he brewed an Irish toddy, and the two men drank without a spoken toast to the old times when they had punched each other's head, fought each other's battles, and shared each other's joys, two affectionate, rollicking, mischievous Irish lads.

The priest spoke finally.

"Nothing else is talked of here in the village," he said; "but you don't hear a word of it mentioned over at the house."

"What house?"

"Peele Manor, to be sure."

"Do you go there?"

"Occasionally—to dine; or to talk with Miss Mairs. We are amiable friends, although she doesn't confess to me."

Bourke raised his head slowly. Something seemed to swirl through his heavy heart.

"Is Honora Mairs a Catholic?" he asked.

"She is indeed, and, like all converts, full to the brim and running over."

Bourke leaned forward, his hand clinching about his chin, his elbow pressing his knee with such force that his arm vibrated. He had been raised a Catholic—he knew its grip. His mind was trained to grasp opportunities on the moment, to work with the nervous yet

mathematical rapidity of electric currents. And like all great lawyers he was a great actor.

"Tim," he said meditatively, "I'm feeling terribly bad over that poor girl I couldn't save."

"Sure and I should think you would, Garan. My heart's breaking for her myself."

"Did you read the trial, Tim?"

"No, faith, I didn't. I've been too busy with these godless folk. Sure they get away from us priests when they get into America. It's only one more drop to hell."

"You're right, Tim, you're right. You always saw things at a glance. But I've got a great work for you to do,—a great work for you and for the Church."

"You have, Garan? You have? Out with it, my boy."

"Do you remember the time when Paddy Flannagan was accused of murdering his old grandmother for the sake of the money in her stocking?" continued Bourke, in the same half absent tone, and lapsing gradually into brogue. "He was convicted, you know, and the whole town was set on him, and we two boys were the worst of the lot. Do you remember how we used to hoot under his jail window at night? And then, quite by accident, at the last minute, two days before he was going to be hanged, you discovered the man that had committed the murder, and you ran as fast as your legs could carry you to save Paddy, shouting all the way,—and that it was the happiest day of your life?"

"Yes, yes!" exclaimed the priest, his face aglow. Bourke had thrown himself back in his chair, his eyes dwelling on his old friend with a smile of affectionate satisfaction.

"It's a grand thing to save a human life, isn't it, Tim?"

"It is, indeed; the grandest, next to saving an immortal soul."

"I'm going to give you a chance to do both,—the soul of one woman and the life of another."

"Garan, Garan, what do you mean?"

"Just let me tell you a few things first, a few things you don't know already." He gave a concise but picturesque and thrilling account of Patience's life and of her trial. As he repeated Honora's testimony, the priest, who had followed his recital with profound interest, leaned forward with sombre brows.

"That woman lied," concluded Bourke, abruptly.

"I'm afraid so. I'm afraid so."

"And if she doesn't open her accursed, perjured lips between now and to-morrow morning at eleven o'clock, that woman up there—" he caught the priest's shoulders suddenly, his face contracting with agony—"the woman I love, Tim, will be murdered. My God, man, don't you see what you've got to do?"

XXI.

HONORA was lying on a couch in her celestial bedroom. No incense burned. The screen was folded closely about the altar. The windows were open. The pure air of spring, the peaceful sounds of night,—disturbed now and again by the hideous shriek of an engine,—the delicate perfume of flowers, played upon her irritated senses. She held a bottle of smelling-salts in her hand. On the table beside her was a jolly-looking bottle of Benedictine.

There was a tap at the door. Honora answered wearily. A maid entered.

"It's Father Connor, miss, and he wants to see you particular."

"Tell him I cannot see him—no, tell him to come up."

She rose hurriedly and smoothed her hair. Mr. and Mrs. Peele had gone South. She was alone in the house, and welcomed the brief distraction of the priest's visit.

"You will pardon me for asking you to come up here," she said as he entered. "But I am in dishabille, and I did not want to keep you waiting. How kind of you to come!"

"Sure it is always a pleasure to see you anywhere,

Miss Mairs," he said, taking the seat she indicated. "What should I do without you in this godless place?"

Several candles burned. The moonlight wandered in, making a ghastly combination. Honora lay back in her chair, looking very pale and beautiful. The priest's profile was toward her for a moment after he ceased speaking, a strong lean determined profile. She watched it warily. But he turned suddenly to her and smiled, and told her an absurd episode of one of his village delinquents.

"Faith, Miss Mairs," he concluded, "you've got to help me. They're too much for one poor priest. I'm not one to flatter, but your face would be enough to make a sinner think of heaven—sure it's the face of an angel! Between the two of us and with the Grace of God we'll reform the village and drive the dirty politicians into the Church or out of the country."

Honora smiled radiantly, and held out her hand. "I will work with you," she said. "I intend to devote my life to the Church."

He held her hand closely, in a strong masculine clasp.

"I believed it of you. But why don't you go to confession, my child?"

The muscles under Honora's fair skin contracted briefly, and she attempted to withdraw her hand; but the priest held it closely.

"I shall go to you next week."

"To-night," he said with soft insistence; "to-night.

Do you know it was that brought me here to-night? I've been knowing ever since I came that something troubled you—was eating your heart out—but I didn't like to speak. I thought every day you would come to me, and I didn't like to intrude. But to-night I said, 'I will!' I couldn't get up my courage when I first came in; but I'm glad I've spoken, for I know you'll be after confessing now. Poor girl! But remember, dear child, the comfort and consolation our blessed Church has for every sinner. Come."

Honora turned her face away, and shook her head.

The priest put out a long arm, and grasping the screen drew it away from the altar. Then he leaned forward, and laying his hands on her shoulders drew her slowly forward and pressed her to her knees. He laid his hand on her head.

"Confess," he said, solemnly.

And Honora suddenly burst into wild sobbing, and confessed that Beverly Peele had dropped his own morphine that night, that his shaking hand had refused to obey his will, and that, blind with pain, he had poured a fourth of the contents into the glass, mixed it with water, and gulped it down; that she had not gone to his assistance because she wished him to die, and the responsibility to fall upon his wife.

Then she sprang to her feet and smote her hands together.

"I did not intend to confess until all was over, but —I—Oh—it has been horrible here alone these two

days—but I would not yield to superstition and go away —and you found me in a weak moment."

She walked up and down the room, talking the more rapidly, the more unreservedly, as the priest made no comment. And after all the years of immobility it was joy to speak out everything in her crowded heart and brain.

"Oh, I am not a monster, I am not abnormal, I am merely a result. It began—when did it begin? I was a child when I came here—I remember little that happened before—it has always been the *rôle* of the poor cousin, I remember no other—no other! never! never! I had to learn patience at an age when other children are clamouring for their little desires. I had to learn humility when other children—while I watched my cousins take all the goods and joys of childhood as their divine right. While their little world was at their feet I was learning to cringe and watch and wait and smile upon people I hated, and listen to people that bored me to death, and suffer vicariously for all the shortcomings of the Peele family when my aunt was in one of her cold rages. It was early that I learned the lesson that if I would occupy a supportable position in life I must 'work' people; I must cultivate will and tact—how I hate the loathsome word—and study the natures of those about me, and play upon them; that I must acquire absolute self-repression, be a sort of automaton, that, being once wound up properly, never makes a false move. I believe that was one thing which

drove me to the Catholic Church,—the unspeakable relief that I should find in confession,—that and one other thing—"

She paused abruptly, and pressed her hands to her face, to which the blood had sprung.

"I loved Beverly Peele," she continued violently. "I do not know when it began; when I was old enough to fall in love, I suppose, and that is young enough with a woman. When we were children we used to play at being married. Even after he was grown and was rather wild, he used to come back to me in the summer-time and tell me that he cared for no one else. I knew all his faults, his weaknesses, his limitations, mental and moral and spiritual,—none better. But I loved him. I worshipped him. He was not even a companion to me, for I was always intellectually ambitious. Not a taste but music did we have in common. I have seen him in raging tempers that would make any other woman despise him—when he seemed an animal, a savage. But nothing made any difference to me. A woman loves or she does not love —that is the beginning and the end. There is no more relation between cause and effect in an infatuated woman's mind than— Oh, well, I can't be finding similes.

"One night he came in here. The next night I kissed the pillow his head would lie on. For a year I was happy; for another I alternated between joy and anguish, jealousy and peace, despair and hope. Then

a year of misery, during which he brutally cast me off. It was that which drove me to the Catholic Church—not only the peace it promised, but the knowledge that with baptism my sin would be washed away—for when happiness went remorse began. I have not a brain of iron, like that woman he married. She could snap her past in two and fling it behind her. She could snap her fingers at moral laws, if it suited her purpose, and know no regret, provided she had had nothing to regret meanwhile. That was one reason why I hated her.

"Oh, how I hated her! How I hated her! Beverly never had any reserve, and he made love to her before my eyes. He was infatuated. His affection for me was an incidental fancy compared to his mad passion for that woman. And month after month! Month after month! And I loved him still!

"I never dared say to myself that when the time came I should have vengeance, for such a resolution I should be obliged to confess; and the priest would make me promise to thrust it out, or refuse me absolution. But down in my heart I knew that when the hour came the temptation would conquer. It came first when I let him drink the morphine. And when I saw her in court, when her lover gave me that sudden suggestion, when I knew that I could send her to that horrible chair—" She threw out her arms and laughed hysterically, "Oh God, I was almost happy again."

The priest rose and stood before her. There were tears in his eyes.

"Poor woman!" he said. "Poor woman!"

Honora's face convulsed, but she shut her lips resolutely and tapped the floor with her foot.

"There is pardon and peace in the Church," he continued softly; "and not only for the sake of that poor girl at Sing Sing, battling to-night with horror and terror, sleepless, listening to the solemn tramp of the death-watch, counting the hours that are marching her to that hideous death, but for the future peace of your own soul speak out and save her. Think of the years of torment, of remorse, when you will not have the excitement of the present, the pressure of your wrongs to sustain you. Speak out, and I will give you absolution, and your soul shall know peace."

But Honora threw back her head and laughed.

"No! No!" she said. "I am not so weak as that. I have no intention of going to pieces at the last moment. It is only her death that will give me peace."

He bent his long body backward, drawing himself up to his full, imposing height.

"And have you thought of what will be the penalty?" he said, in a low voice, and with an intonation that was almost a chant.

She shuddered, but dragged her eyes away.

"I don't care!" she said passionately. "I don't care!"

"You are sure?" he said, in the same voice.

She drew two short breaths. "Oh, go away and

leave me," she said. "Why did you come here? I did not intend to confess until all was over."

"And you expected absolution?"

"I would have done any penance. I would have burnt my flesh with red-hot irons—"

He gave a short, scornful laugh.

"The Church wants no such makeshift penances," he said passionately. "It has no use for the sinner that commits deliberate crime to-day and comes cringing and triumphant to the confessional to-morrow. We have no use for such as you," he suddenly shouted, flinging out his arm and pointing his index finger at her. "You are a disgrace to the Church, a pollution; you are the lips of the leper upon the pure body of a Saint. We have no place for such as you. We have only one method by which to deal with you and such as you—" He curved his body, and his voice fell to a hollow monotone: "Ex-commu-nica-tion."

The woman stared at him with pale, distended eyes, no breath issuing from her dry lips, then sank to the floor, a miserable, collapsed, quivering heap. The priest went to the window and called to a man who stood on the walk below.

XXII.

BOURKE was pacing up and down among the trees, his eyes seldom absent from the man standing motionless in front of the house, or from the light in Honora Mairs' window. He struck a match every few moments and looked at his watch. He lit a cigar, then found himself biting rapidly along its length with vicious energy. He flung it away and lit another, puffed at it violently, then let it fall to the ground as he pressed his hands suddenly to his eyes, shutting out the picture of Patience in her cell.

All the agony and doubt and despair of the past year were crowded into this hour. Would the priest succeed? Was he clever enough to outwit a clever and implacable woman? If he had only caught her in a moment of weakness. But was there any weakness in that organisation of knit and tempered steel? "He'll blarney her," he thought, with sudden hope,—"but bah! you can't blarney a snake. That will go so far with her and no farther. Only acting can save us. If he can act well enough to fill the stage on which this terrible tragedy is set, and conquer that woman's imagination, he can save my poor girl, but not otherwise."

His hands clutched the bushes as he passed. He kicked the gravel from his feet. He cursed aloud, not

knowing what he was saying. He felt an intolerable thirst; his eyeballs burned; his heart hammered spasmodically.

He looked at his watch. It was twelve o'clock. His spinning brain conceived the wild project of forcing himself up to that lighted room at the corner of the house and putting the woman to the torture. And at that moment he saw the priest lean out of the window and speak to the notary public, who immediately entered the house.

A half-hour later the priest came out of the front-door and toward him. He held a paper in his hand.

Bourke was waiting at the door. He took the affidavit from the priest, glanced over it, and thrust it into his pocket.

"Come," he said. "I'll get one of the men here to hitch up a team and drive us to the One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street station. There we'll take the train for Forty-second Street, and at the Grand Central the train for Albany. No south-bound local will pass here for an hour. I happen to know that the governor is in Albany to-night attending a banquet."

XXIII.

PATIENCE had given up hope at last. Its death had been accompanied by wonder rather than by despair. Her remarkable experience with Bourke had led her to idealise him even beyond the habit of woman, and her faith in his abiltty to save her had been absolute. Nevertheless, woman-like, she wove elaborate excuses for him, and loved him none the less.

The day had dragged itself into twenty years. The chaplain had called and been dismissed. The warden had visited her and uttered the conventional words of sympathy, to which Patience had listened without expression, loathing the coarse, ungrammatical brute. The head-keeper she liked, for she was the first to recognise true sympathy and nobility within whatever bark. Miss Beale had come and wept and kissed her hands through the bars.

"Patience! Patience!" she sobbed. "If it could only be said that you died like a Christian!"

"It can be said that I died like an American gentlewoman of the nineteenth century," replied Patience. "I am quite satisfied to know that they will be obliged to say that."

Miss Beale shook her head vigorously. "You will fail when the time comes," she said. "Only the Lord

can sustain you. Please, Patience, let me pray with you."

"Please let me die in peace," said Patience, wearily, "and consistently. I shall not make a spectacle of myself. Don't worry."

After Miss Beale had gone the prison barber came and shaved a bald spot on the back of her head. She kept her face in the shadow, her teeth set, her skin thrilling with horror.

She sat on the edge of her bed until midnight. In the past two months, despite her faith in Bourke, she had deliberately allowed her mind to dwell upon the execution until fear had worn blunt. She was conscious of none to-night. Moreover, she had the poise of one that has lived close to the great mysteries of life. Were she free she might have a lifetime of happiness with Bourke, but in degree there were many hours of the past year that in mortal limitations could never be surpassed. The people had won their fight, but she felt that she had cheated them at every other point. For, after all, happiness is of kind, not of quantity. They could strike from her many years of life, but had she not lived? And a few years more or less—what mattered it? One must die at the last. She had realised an ideal. She had known love in its profoundest meaning, in its most delicate vibrations. A thousand years could give her no more than that.

Suddenly she lifted her head. The rain was dashing

against her high window and against the windows of the corridor. She flushed and trembled and held her breath expectantly. In a moment she lay along the bed, and in a moment more forgot her evil state. Memories without form trooped through her brain: snatches and flashes of childhood and adolescence, glimmers of dawn, and stirrings of deeps, vistas of enchanted future, the rising and receding, rising and receding of Mystery, the vague pleasurable loneliness—the protest of separateness.

Then she pressed her face into the pillows, weeping wildly that she should see Bourke no more. The rain gave him to her in terrible mockery. Every part of her demanded him. She cared nothing for the morrow; she had thought of no to-morrows when with him. Morrows were naught, for there was always the last; but the present are always there to fulfil or torment. She shuddered once. The rain had given her back the power to long and dream; and to longing and dreaming there could be no fulfilment, not in this world, now nor ever.

She beat her clenched hand against the bed, not in fear, but in passionate resentment that she with her magnificent endowment for happiness should be snuffed out in her youth, and that there was no power on earth to assuage her lover's agony. She wondered where he was, what he was doing. She knew that there was no sleep for him.

Her philosophy deserted her, as philosophy will when

the sun is under the horizon. She ceased to be satisfied with what had been; the great love in her soul cried out and demanded its eternal rights. And her fainting courage demanded the man. . . .

Her thoughts suddenly took a whimsical turn. What should she be like in eternity shorn of her stronger part?—for assuredly in her case the man and the woman were one. Was space full of those incomplete shapes? —roaming—roaming—for what?—and whither? She recalled a painting of Vedder's called "Identity" and Aldrich's verses beneath:—

"Somewhere, in desolate, wind-swept space,
In Twilight land, in No-man's land,
Two wandering shapes met face to face,
And bade each other stand.

"'And who are you?' cried one, agape,
Shuddering in the gloaming light,
'I know not,' said the second shape,
'I only died last night.'"

The picture had fascinated her profoundly until she had suddenly noticed that one of the shapes looked as if she had left her teeth on her death-bed. She laughed aloud suddenly. . . .

For the first time she felt curious about the hereafter. Poetry had demonstrated to her that hereafter of some sort there must be: the poet sees only the soul of his creations, makes the soul talk as it would if untrammelled of flesh, and in unconscious forecast of its freedom. Browning, alone, would have taught her this.

His greater poems were those of another and loftier world. No wonder poets were a mad, unhappy race, with their brief awakenings of the cosmic sense, their long contemplations of what should be, in awful contrast to what is. . . .

Patience suddenly turned from the thoughts of the hereafter in shuddering horror. Then, as now, she should be alone. Perhaps it would be as well, if she were to look like that shape. . . . But she should know soon enough!

Whimsies deserted her as abruptly as they had come. She realised with terrible vividness all that she was leaving, the sweetness of it, the beauty of it—and the awful part allotted to the man.

She had imagined that in her last night on earth—if it came to that—her mind would dwell on the great problems of life; but she cried herself to sleep.

XXIV.

BOURKE and the priest arrived in Albany at two minutes past eight in the morning. A hack carried them to the governor's house in less than ten minutes.

Bourke's ring was answered immediately. He had his card ready, also that of the priest.

"Take these to the governor," he said to the butler. "We must see him at once."

"The governor took the 8.13 express for New York."

Bourke uttered an oath which the priest did not rebuke.

"Did he leave an answer to a telegram he received between two and five this morning?"

"No, sir; no telegrams are ever sent here—by special orders, sir. They are all sent to the State House."

Bourke's skin turned grey; his eyes dulled like those of a dying man. But only for a moment. His brain worked with its customary rapidity.

"Come", he said to the priest. "There is only one thing to do."

To the hackman he said: "Twenty dollars if you get to the station in five minutes."

He and the priest jumped into the hack. The driver lashed the horses. They dashed down the steep

hills of Albany. Two policemen rushed after them, shouting angrily; but the horses galloped the faster, the driver bounding on his seat. People darted shrieking out of their way. Other teams pulled hastily aside, oaths flying.

They reached the station in exactly four minutes and a half. Bourke had little money with him, but he was well known, and known to be wealthy. In less than five minutes the superintendent, in regard for a check for two hundred and fifty dollars, had ordered out the fastest engine in the shop. In ten minutes more it was ready, and the message had flashed along the line to make way for "45."

By this time every man in the yard was surging about the engine in excited sympathy. As the engineer gave the word and Bourke and the priest climbed in, the men cheered lustily. Bourke raised his hat. Father Connor waved them his blessing. The engine sprang down the road in pursuit of the New York express.

Despite the flying moments, the horror that seemed to sit grimacing upon the hour of eleven every time that he looked at his watch, Bourke felt the exhilaration of that ride, the enchantment of uncertainty. The morning air was cool; the river flashed with gold; the earth was very green. They seemed to cut the air as they raced through fields and towns, dashed and whizzed round curve after curve. People ran after them, some shouting with terror, thinking it was a runaway engine.

Father Connor had bought some sandwiches at the

station, and Bourke ate mechanically. He wondered if he should ever recognise the fine flavour of food again.

The priest put his lips to Bourke's ear and spoke for the first time.

"Where do you expect to catch the train?"

"At Poughkeepsie. It waits there ten minutes."

"And what shall you do if you don't catch it?"

"Go on to Sing Sing, and do the best I can. I have made one fatal mistake: I should have telegraphed to Sing Sing. But I was mad, I think, until I reached Albany, and there it is no wonder I forgot it. The regular time for—that business is round eleven o'clock, about a quarter past; but if the warden happens to be drunk there's no telling what he will take it into his head to do. But I dare not stop."

Suddenly they shot about a curve. The engineer shouted "There! There!" A dark speck was just making another curve, far to the south.

"The express!" cried the engineer. "We've side-tracked everything else. We'll catch her now."

An hour later they dashed into Poughkeepsie, the express only two minutes ahead of them. Amidst a crowd of staring people, Bourke and the priest, begrimed, dishevelled, leaped from the engine and boarded a parlour car of the express. Alone, Bourke would probably have been arrested as a madman, controlled as was his demeanour; but the priest's frock forbade interference.

The governor was not in the parlour car, nor in the next, nor in the next.

Yes, he had been there, a porter replied, and would be there again: but he had left the train as soon as it had stopped. No, he did not know in what direction he had gone; nor did anyone else.

There was nothing to do but to wait. Bourke sent a telegram to Sing Sing, but it relieved his anxiety little: he knew the languid methods of the company's officials in country towns.

There were five of those remaining seven minutes when he thought he was going mad. An immense crowd had gathered by this time about the station. Nobody knew exactly what was the matter, and nobody dared ask the man walking rapidly up and down the platform, watch in hand, gripping the arm of a priest; but hints were flying, and no one doubted that this sudden furious incursion of a flying engine and the extraordinary appearance of Bourke had to do with the famous prisoner at Sing Sing.

At exactly three minutes to starting time the governor came sauntering down the street, a tooth-pick in his mouth, his features overspread with the calm and good-will which bespeak a recently warmed interior. Bourke reached him almost at a bound. He was a master of words, and in less than a minute he had presented the governor with the facts in the case and handed him the affidavit.

"Good," said the governor. "I'm glad enough to

do this. It's you that will understand, Mr. Bourke, that I would have been violating a sacred duty if I'd slapped public opinion in the face before."

He wrote rapidly on the back of the affidavit.

"This will do for the present," he said. "I'll fix it up in style when I go back. You're a great man, Mr. Bourke."

But Bourke had gone. Whistles were sounding, train men were yelling. He and the priest barely had time to jump on their engine when they were ordered to clear the track.

Bourke glanced at his watch as they sprang out of the station. The time was twenty minutes past ten. It was barely possible to reach Sing Sing in three quarters of an hour. Lead was in his veins. His head felt light. The chances for his last and paramount success were very slim.

But the great engine dashed along like an inspired thing, and seemed to throb in sympathy. There was a note of triumphant encouragement in its sudden piercing shrieks. It tossed a cow off the track as lightly as the poor brute had lately whisked a fly from its hindquarters. It whistled merrily to the roaring air. It snorted disdainfully when Bourke, refusing to heed its mighty lullaby, curved his hands about his mouth and shouted to the engineer:—

"For God's sake, go faster!"

XXV.

THE town of Sing Sing was awake at daylight. It was the most exciting and important day of its history. The women, even the pitiful ones, arose with a pleasurable flutter and donned their Sunday frocks. The matrons dressed the children in their brightest and best, and laid the gala cover on the baby-carriage. The men of the village took a half-holiday and made themselves as smart as their women. The saloon-keepers stocked their shelves and spread their counters with tempting array of corned beef, cold ham, cheese, crackers, pickles, and pretzels.

By ten o'clock a hundred teams had driven into the town, and were hitched to every post, housed in every stable. A number stood along that part of the road which commanded a view of the prison towers.

The women sat about on the slope opposite the prison, pushing the baby-carriages absently back and forth, or gossiping with animation. Other women crowded up the bluff, settling themselves comfortably to await, with what patience they could muster, the elevation of the black flag.

The reporters and witnesses of the execution sat on a railing near the main entrance, smoking cigarettes and discussing probabilities. Inside and out the at-

mosphere of intense and suppressed excitement was trying to even the stout nerves of the head-keeper. The assistant keepers, in bright new caps, moved about with an air of portentous solemnity.

Never had Sing Sing seen a more beautiful day. The sky was a dome of lapis-lazuli. The yellow sun sparkled down on the imposing mediæval pile of towers and turrets, on the handsome grey buildings above the green slopes near by, on the graveyard with its few dishonoured dead, on the gaily dressed expectant people, as exhilaratingly as had death and dishonour never been. The river and the wooded banks beyond were as sweet and calm as if the great building with the men in the watch-towers were some feudal castle, in which, perchance, a captured princess pined.

The head-keeper walked once or twice to the telegraph-table in a corner of the office, and asked the girl in charge if any message had come.

"It's the wish that's father to the thought," he said to the warden; "but I can't help hoping for a reprieve or a commutation or something. Poor thing, I feel awful sorry for her."

"Damn her," growled his chief. "She's too high-toned for me. When I read the death-warrant to her this morning she turned her back on me square."

"She's awful proud, and I guess she has a hard time keeping up; but it ain't no time for resentment. I must say I did think Mr. Bourke 'd save her, and I can't help thinking he will yet."

"Time's getting short," said the warden, with a dry laugh. "It's 10.40, and the execution takes place at 11.12 sharp."

"Couldn't you make some excuse to put it off a day or so? It ain't like Mr. Bourke."

"Not much. Off she goes at 11.12." And he got up heavily and shuffled out.

The head-keeper took a decanter of brandy from the sideboard and placed it, with a number of glasses, on the table. Then he called in the newspaper men and other witnesses.

He wandered about restlessly as the men entered and drank in silence. He carried a stick of malacca topped with silver. One or two of the newspaper men shuddered as it caught their eye. They knew its hideous portent.

"Guess we'd better go," he said, after one more fruitless trip to the telegraph-table. "It takes time to go through those underground passages."

As the great gates were about to close behind them he turned suddenly and called a guard.

"If it should so happen that Mr. Bourke should come, or telegraph, or that anything should happen before—11.16—I can delay it that long—just you be on hand to make a bolt. It ain't like Mr. Bourke to sit down and do nothing. I feel it in my bones that he's moving heaven and earth this minute."

XXVI.

It was five minutes after eleven. Patience sat on the edge of her bed, her hands clenched, her face grey. But she was calm. The horror and sinking which had almost mastered her as the warden read the death-warrant, she had fought down and under. And she had drunk a quantity of black coffee. She had but one thought, one desire left,—to die bravely. Even Bourke was forgotten, and hope and regret. She was conscious of but one passionate wish, not to quail, not for a second. Perhaps there was a slight touch of the dramatic instinct, even in this last extremity, for she imagined the scene and her attitude again and again. In consequence, there was a sense of unreality in it all. She felt as if about to play some great, final act; she could not realise that the climax meant her own annihilation. Physically she was very tired, and would have liked to lie down for hours, although the coffee had routed sleep. Once she half extended herself on the bed, then sat erect, her mouth contracting spasmodically.

Suddenly she heard the noise of many feet shuffling on a bare floor. She knew that it came from the execution-room. She shuddered and bit her lips. Now and again, through the high windows, came the

shrill note of a woman's voice, or a baby's soft light laugh.

A moment later she sprang to her feet, quivering in every nerve, her hands clenched in a final and successful attempt at absolute self-mastery. On the door separating the Death House from the main building, resounded three loud raps, slow and deliberate. They reverberated in the ears of the condemned like the blast of the last trumpet.

The door opened, and the head-keeper entered, walking slowly, and stopping once to hold whispered converse with the death-watch. Patience controlled an impulse to call to him to hurry and have it over.

He came forward at last, tapping his malacca stick on the floor, unlocked the door of her cell, and offered her his arm. He bent to her ear as if to whisper something, then evidently thought better of it, and led her slowly to the passage facing the execution-room. Again she wanted to ask him to hurry, but dared not speak. The death-watch turned away his head. The lace of her low shoe untied, and she stooped mechanically and fastened it.

The head-keeper asked her if she would like some brandy,—he would send and get it for her. She shook her head emphatically. The exaltation of heroism was beginning to possess her, and she would give no newspaper the chance to say that she owed her fortitude to alcohol.

They walked down the narrow, vaulted way through

which so many had gone to their last hideous moments. The head-keeper fumbled at the lock. The door swung open. For a moment Patience closed her eyes; the big room of yellow wood was a blaze of sunlight. Then she opened them and glanced curiously about her.

The execution-room was large and high and square and cheerful. On the left, many feet above the floor, was a row of windows. At the far end a number of men that had been sitting on stools stood up hurriedly as the prisoner entered, and doffed their hats. They were the newspaper men. She recognised most of them, and bent her head. At the opposite end near the door leading to the Death House was a chair. Patience regarded it steadily in spite of its brilliancy. It was a solid chair of light coloured oak, like the room, and supported on three legs. Two were at the back; in front was one of curious construction, almost a foot in breadth. This leg was divided in two at the extremity. Half way up there was a cross piece which spread the full width of the chair. To this was fastened the straps to hold the ankles of the condemned. The chair stood on a rubber mat to ensure perfect insulation. It was studded with small electric lamps, dazzling, white-hot.

Behind the chair was a square cupboard in which stood the unknown, who, at a given signal, would turn on the current.

Two prison guards stood by the chair, one behind

it and one on the right. The State electrician, two surgeons, and a man in light-blue clothes stood near.

Patience turned her eyes to the reporters. The young men were very pale. They regarded her with deep sympathy, and perhaps a bitter resentment at the impotence of their manhood. One looked as if he should faint, and turning his back suddenly raised something to his lips. Even the "Eye" man still held his hat in his hand, and had not resumed his seat. Only one watched her with eager wolfish curiosity. He was the youngest of them all, and it was his first great story.

Patience wondered if she looked ugly after her long confinement, and possibly ridiculous, as most women look when they have dressed without a mirror. But there was no curve of amusement on the young men's faces, and they were shuffling their feet uneasily. Her hair hung in a long braid. She looked very young.

She dropped the head-keeper's arm and walked deliberately to the chair; but he caught her hand and held her back.

"Wait a minute," he said, with affected gruffness. He went to the chair and examined it in detail. He asked a number of questions, which were answered by the electrician with haughty surprise. In a moment the reporters were staring, and like a lightning flash one brain informed another that "something was in the wind."

When the head-keeper had lingered about the chair

as long as he dared he returned to Patience, who was standing rigidly where he had left her, and drawing a short breath said,—

"If you have any last words, ma'am, you are at liberty to speak."

"I have nothing to say," replied Patience, wondering if her mouth or brain were speaking.

"Yes, yes, speak," exclaimed several of the reporters. They had out their pads in an instant; but, for once, it was not the news instinct that was alert. The most quick-witted men in the world, they realised that the head-keeper was endeavouring to gain time. Their stiff felt hats dropped to the floor and bounced about. Their hands shook a little. For perhaps the first time in their history they were more men than journalists.

"I don't wish to speak," said Patience, and again she walked toward the chair. The newspaper men sprang forward with an uncontrollable movement, but the guards waved them back.

"Be careful, young men," said the head-keeper with pompous severity. "Any more of that, and you go out." Taking advantage of the momentary scraping of boots, he whispered in Patience's ear, "For God's sake speak—and a good long one. You must have something to say; and it's your last chance on earth."

"I have nothing to say," she replied, her brain closed to all impressions but one. "Can't you see that I need all my strength? If you have any mercy in you put me in that chair and have done with it."

"Oh, you are not the kind to break down—my God!"

The silence of the prison, the hush without the walls, was pierced by a single shriek, a shriek which seemed shot from earth to heaven, a mighty shriek of furious warning.

Every man in the room jumped. The newspaper men drew their breath with a hard sound. Only Patience gave no heed.

"It's an engine," stuttered the head-keeper, "and there's no train due at this hour—"

The outer door was flung violently open. The warden stamped heavily into the room. His face was purple.

"Why in hell hasn't this execution taken place?" he roared. "Get to work!"

The head-keeper's face turned very white. His hand shook a little. The men stared at him with jumping nerves. Patience and the warden were the only persons in the room unaffected by the inexplicable excitement which had taken possession of the atmosphere.

"Get to work," repeated the warden.

Patience walked to the chair and seated herself, extending her arms in position. Once more her brain relaxed its grasp on every thought but the determination not to scream nor quiver. She closed her eyes and set her teeth.

The guards began to fasten the straps, but slowly, under the significant eyes of the head-keeper. The

warden stamped up and down. The electrician came forward. The surgeon went into an adjoining room and cast his eyes over his instruments, laid out on a long table.

The brain works eccentrically in such moments. Patience's suddenly flung upon her consciousness a picture of Carmel tower. She speculated upon the fate of her owl. She recalled that the Mission had been restored, and wondered if Solomon, that proud and elderly hermit, had turned his haughty back upon civilisation to dwell alone in the black arbours of the remote pine-tops of the forest. She saw the spray toss itself into scattering wraiths, as when she had knelt there—a thousand years ago—a little, lonely girl in copper-toed boots, dreaming dreams that were pricked with no premonition of life's tragic horrors.

She frowned suddenly, recalling her long-lived determination to take life as a spectacular drama. Life had gotten the best of her! Assuredly there was nothing impersonal about this ignominious and possibly excruciating death. The thought banished Carmel tower. Her mind was a sudden blaze of light—white light she thought with a stifled shrink—in which every detail of the room was sharply accentuated. She opened her eyes, but only a trifle, lest these men see the horror in them. Her blood was curdling, but she knew that she was making no sign.

Her sensitised mind received the immediate impression that the atmosphere of the room was vibrating with

excitement. She saw the head-keeper's neck crane, his furtive glance at the outer door. He expected someone. Bourke!

She set her teeth. She had believed up to last night that he would save her. Why had she doubted him for an instant? She understood now the diplomacy of the head-keeper. Why had she not spoken when he had implored her?

It seemed to her that the men fastening the straps were racing each other. She wanted to whisper to them to lag, but pride stayed her tongue.

The warden was striding about and swearing. The electricians and surgeons were whispering in a group.

She looked at the newspaper men. She met their gaze of excited sympathy, understood at last the spirit that animated them, and bowed her head. She dared not speak.

But in a moment indignation routed gratitude. Why did they not rescue her, these young, vigorous men! They knew her to be innocent. They outmatched in number the guards. Where was their manhood? What had become of all the old traditions? Then her anger left as suddenly as it had come. They were not knights with battle, axes, but the most exaggerated product of modern civilisation. It was almost a miracle that they passionately wished to save her.

Her head was drawn gently back, her eyes covered. Something leapt and fought within her. Horror tore at her vitals, snarling like a wolf-hound. But once more

her will rose supreme. Then, as she realised that her last moment had come, she became possessed by one mighty desire, to compel her imagination to give her the phantasm, the voice, the touch of her lover.

The wrench with which she accomplished her object was so violent, the mental concentration so overmastering, that all other consciousness was extinguished.

Suddenly her ears were pierced by a din which made her muscles leap against the straps. Was she in hell, and was this her greeting? She felt a second's thankfulness that death had been painless.

Then, out of the babel of sound she distinguished words which made her sit erect and open her eyes, her pulses bound, her blood leap, hot and stinging, her whole being rebound with gladness of life.

The cap had been removed, the men were unbuckling the straps. The head-keeper had flung his cap on the floor and run his hands through his hair until it stood up straight. Round her chair the newspaper men were pressing, shouting and cheering, trying to get at her hand to shake it.

She smiled and held out her hand, but dared not speak to them. Pride still lived, and she was afraid that she should cry.

Then she forgot them. A sudden parting in the ranks showed her the open door. At the same moment the men stopped shouting. Bourke had entered. He had followed the guard mechanically, neither hoping